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ON & OFF DUTY IN ANNAM

BY

GABRIELLE M. VASSAL

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS FROM
PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR

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1910

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TO

MY HUSBAND

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INTRODUCTION

FRENCH Indo-China forms the Eastern side of the Indo-Chinese peninsula. It is bounded to the east and south by the China Sea, to the north by the Chinese Empire, to the west by Burmah and Siam. Its greatest rivers are the Mekong and the Red River, which form, at their mouth, alluvial lands and rich deltas where the Tonkinese have settled in the north, the Cochin-Chinese and Cambodians in the south. Between the valleys of the Mekong and Red River, extending over a distance of 1000 kilometres, stretches a chain of mountains, which proceeds from the Tibetan system by the Yunnan plateau.

The "Annamitic Chain" expands in North Tonking, traverses Annam, where the highest peaks and largest plateaux (Tranninh, Langbian, 1500 metres) are to be found; then dies down into the sea at Cap St. Jacques.

The eastern coast-line is so near this mountain chain that the valleys of Annam are of small extent. Those of Song Ca and of Song Ma, in the rich provinces of Thanh-Hoa and Vinh, must be mentioned however, also those of Binh-Dinh and Quang-Nam. Finally, to the south, is the Song Cai, the river of Hué and Tourane, and the Donai, which rises in the Langbian and forms one of the tributaries of the Saigon River.

Indo-China, a country much greater in size than France, can be said to form a big capital J, of which Tonking forms the head, Cochin-China and Cambodia the tail, and Annam the trunk. The ancient Annamese were fond of representing their country by a pair of scales, the pans loaded with rice, Annam itself was the beam of the scales, not only from its geographical outline, but also on account of its relative poverty. The population of this country is estimated at five millions, whilst that of the remainder of Indo-China is about ten or twelve millions.

The Annamese people the delta of the Red River, the lower valleys and the shores of the China Sea, and the lower delta of the Mekong. They form four-fifths of the population of the Indo-China of to-day, which moreover differs very little from the ancient empire of Annam. This included the present Annam, Tonking, and Cochin-China. The King of Cambodia was tributary. Laos and the mountainous hinterland of Annam were beyond its sway.

The Cambodians—ancient Khmers—inhabit the upper delta of the Mekong and the country of the Great Lakes. The Thais extend over the upper reaches of the Mekong, and a fourth race, the Chams or Tchams, after having played an important part in the history of Indo-China, have been absorbed or dispersed. A few of them, however, are still to be found in villages in Phan-Rang and Phan-Tiet (South Annam) and at Chaudoc (Cochin-China).

The Mois are the aboriginal people of Annam, whom later civilisations gradually drove towards the summit of the mountains. The Annamese call them

Mois, the Cambodians *Stiengs* or *Penongs*, the Thais, *Khas*.

The Chinese are naturally very numerous in Indo-China; after many centuries they have acquired an exceptional position here, and gained the respectful title of "*cai-chu*" (uncles).

In their dealings with the Annamese they are, as it best profits them, either discreetly or insolently superior. Except in Tonking, it is they who carry on all the small trade. They are unrivalled shop-keepers, devoted to their work, clever, honest, and very united among themselves. They do not cultivate rice-fields, but they monopolise the rice trade, building manufactories to shell the rice and chartering boats to export it. From the very first days of the European occupation they have made themselves indispensable as intermediaries between the white and yellow races. They have strengthened this position by monopolising all trade connected with gambling, opium, and alcohol. They are perhaps Indo-China's best colonists, and those who make the greatest profits. There can be no question of evicting them at present as the Americans have done in the Philippines (Chinese Exclusion Act). The French have simply tried to limit Chinese immigration by raising heavy taxes on the Celestials, so as to re-establish the equilibrium in favour of the Annamese. In Cochin-China, for instance, a Chinese from eighteen to forty-six years pays, first, a head-tax, which varies from four to four-hundred piastres, and secondly, a prestation tax of from two to fifty piastres a year. Every Chinese must belong to a "congregation," a sort of association which

is responsible to the State for all its members civilly and pecuniarily.

The climate of Indo-China is not the same everywhere. While in Tonking and North Annam there is a real winter the temperature in Cambodia and Cochin-China is always hot and damp. The average temperature of Saigon is 30°.77, of Nhatrang 26°.79, and that of Haiphong 24°.79 Centigrade. The year is divided into two seasons: dry and wet, according to the monsoons (N.E. from October 15 to April 15, S.W. the rest of the year).

The unity of Indo-China was realised by M. Doumer in 1898. The five States of the Union are: Tonking, Cochin-China, Annam, Cambodia, Laos. A new territory has been added: Quan-Tchéou on the Lei Tchéou peninsula, a little to the north of the Hainan Straits, ceded by China. The colonial union has thus been able to acquire a moral personality, permitting it to realise large loans and to carry out extensive public works.

Annam proper is that long strip of country, more than 1000 kilometres in length, which unites Cochin-China to Tonking. The government is a Protectorate. The Emperor reigns at Hué with the help of regents and of the Chief Council of the kingdom, the *Comat*. The "Résident Supérieur de France," at Hué, is president of the Comat and represents the protecting Power. The whole of the native administration is under the direct control of French officials. There are ten provinces in Annam. At the head of each is a Civil Service official, who takes the title of "Résident de France." The

"Résident Supérieur" has the supreme authority over all the services.

The revenue of Annam is about three million piastres. Each province has its own particular revenue, which varies, according to the importance of the population and the value of the land, from fifty to two hundred thousand piastres.

With the exception of Hué and Thanh-Hoa, the chief towns of Annam are on the coast. Starting from the south, one first reaches Phan-Tiet and Phan-Rang, then the magnificent port of Camranh, where the Russian fleet took shelter before the battle of Tsoushima. After Nhatrang, you pass Qui-Nhon and Tourane. Tourane is the only port with dockyards, between Saigon and Haiphong. It stretches along the left bank of the Song-Hau and joins the big Chinese town, Faifo.

Hué is the capital, and here it is that the manners and customs of the great mandarins are best preserved. The royal palaces, and especially the tombs, are most characteristic of Annamese architecture.

In North Annam, Vinh and Than-Hoa are the two most important cities.

The Annamese are descended from the *Giao-Chi*, once established in the south of China. Giao-Chi means *separated big toe;* this is a peculiarity which the Annamese have not yet lost, and which enables them to use their big toe in a most skilful manner. The Giao-Chi may be traced back to the remotest antiquity. Nearly three thousand years before our era they occupied Yunnan, the Quan-Si, Quan Toung, and Tonking.

A Chinese prince sent his son Lôc Tuc to govern

the Giao-Chi. It is the origin of the Hông Bang dynasty, which reigned over those *Qui* (foreign devils) for more than two thousand years. It is only in the third century B.C. that we can emerge from this legendary period.

At that time intestine struggles divided the Giao-Chi country into two parts: the Van-Lang to the people of the plain and deltas, the Thai to those of the hill-country. China seized this opportunity of establishing a new Chinese dynasty. In the year 111 B.C. she conquered the country and kept it in subjection till A.D. 968. The Annamese were therefore governed by Chinese mandarins, who accustomed them to Chinese civilisation during more than a millennium. The literature and moral code of Confucius gave a definite shape to Annamese thought and religion. That their national spirit was still alive is proved from time to time in the repeated insurrections and heroic rebellions against their conquerors. From 39–36 B.C. an Annamese woman, after proclaiming the independence of her country, expelled the Chinese for a time, and reigned under the name of Tru'ng Vu'ong.

But it was not till the middle of the tenth century that the foreigner was driven out and the first national dynasty established. The Dinh, then the Lê (first dynasty) were followed by the Ly, the Tran, and the Hô (968–1407), ephemeral dynasties which gave place in the end to a new Chinese occupation. Treated with unexampled severity, the Annamese rebelled, and once more became free. Their great deliverer was a poor Tonkinese fisherman, Lê-Soi, who received a miraculous sword from the genii of the

little lake at Hanoi. He was proclaimed king. This dynasty (second dynasty of the Lê) occupied the throne till the end of the eighteenth century.

Among the monarchs of this line Thanh-Tong must be specially mentioned as proving himself a clever ruler and great warrior. He formed the six Ministries of State, the mandarin hierarchy, reorganised the civil code, and did much to promote agriculture and public instruction. Placing himself at the head of an army of 260,000 men, he attacked the Chams in their capital and exterminated them. For fifteen centuries the Chams had inhabited the larger part of Annam proper. As the representatives of Hindoo civilisation, they have left remarkable monuments of their past glory. Only a few survivals now remain. This rapid extinction of a powerful and civilised race by the Annamese is a problem of the highest interest.

The Mois, on the other hand, have survived the disturbances and revolutions of the country's history. Far away in the remote mountainous regions of Annam they have retained their primitive habits. An incongruous collection of wretched tribes may there be found who have sacrificed everything to their love of freedom. At all events, they have succeeded in occupying an immense hinterland, the possession of which their neighbours did not find it worth while to dispute with them.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century the Annamese had extended their rule over Tonking-Annam, and the whole territory of Cochin-China proper. Here they very naturally transformed the

valleys and deltas into fertile rice-fields, but made the great mistake of neglecting the hill-country. For it can well be believed that a strong position in the mountains would have enabled them to defend themselves and remain a free people.

It was in the reign of Louis XVI. in 1787 that Annam for the first time came into contact with France. Gialong, of the dynasty of the Nguyen, had been desperately struggling to recover his crown, usurped by the three brothers Tay Son. Not succeeding in this exploit, he followed the advice of the Bishop of Adran, and sent an embassy to France demanding protection. With the help of the French officers Olivier, Chaigneau, Vannier, and Dayot—King Gialong reconquered all his lands. His successor, Ming-Mang, broke off all connection with Europe, in order to gain the support of China, from whom he accepted investiture. Tu-Duc made several attacks on the Christians, whom he massacred in great numbers with their European missionaries. The Spanish and French interfered, and Saigon was taken by Admiral Rigault de Genouilly in 1861. In the following year, Tu-Duc, finding himself besieged in his own capital, was obliged to give up Lower Cochin-China to France. The rest of Cochin-China became French territory in 1867. The King of Cambodia, Norodom, had placed himself under the protection of the French in 1863. The provinces of Angkor and Batambang have been lately given back by Siam, during the reign of Sisowah, in consequence of the happy negotiations of Lieutenant-Colonel Bernard.

The conquest of Tonking required far greater

efforts on the part of the French troops, because of Annam's alliance with China, and more especially because the politics of France were uncertain and confused. The French of the metropolis were themselves opposed to it, and it was only through the genius and skill of Jules Ferry that this colony was added to the mother-country, one might almost say against her will.

On two several occasions Tonking was taken and lost, first by Francis Garnier and then by Commandant Rivière. Both attempts, though extraordinarily audacious, failed through want of support at the right moment. A new start had to be made. Admiral Courbet directed the expedition. The French now had to face not only the Annamese, but numerous bands of pirates and the regular troops from the Chinese frontier provinces of the Quan Si and Yunnan. Some splendid feats of arms took place, the capture of Son-tay and Bac-Ninh, the battles of Bac-Lé and Kep, the defence of Tuyen-Quang by the Commander Dominé (1884–85). The cause appeared to be won. The army of the Yunnan was destroyed, that of Quan-Si had been driven beyond the frontier, and from the fort of Lang-Son the movements of the enemy could be carefully kept in view. At sea, after the bombardment of Fou-Tchéou, Admiral Courbet received orders to take Formosa. He was unsuccessful, and had to be content with merely forming a blockade. Later he took the islands of Pescadores. China was on the point of coming to terms, when the panic of Lang-Son took place (March 28, 1885). It created considerable ex-

citement in Paris: the Ferry Ministry fell. Tonking, in spite of all, was finally conquered; a treaty with China recognised the sovereignty of France.

The military operations in Annam, started by Admiral Courbet in 1883, had the following political results: Recognition of the French Protectorate, restoration of the control of the finances and customs, and the permanent occupation of the forts of Thuan-An and the lines of Vung-Khiona. After the settlement of Tonking, the French wished to consolidate their position in Annam. General de Courcy entrenched himself in the citadel of Hué. There he was suddenly attacked by superior numbers, but put them to rout (July 1885). The King of Annam, Nam Nghi, who had escaped from Hué, was deposed and replaced by Dong-Khan, whose name means "Union of the Two Nations." One of the regents had been captured and sent into captivity, the other followed the fortunes of the King Nam-Nghi, who had been driven into the Moi country. Thus there were two Kings in Annam, and two large factions. The Christians, suspected of friendliness to the foreigner, were massacred by the orders of Nam-Nghi to the number of 20,000. The question of Tonking-Annam, which had caused the fall of the Ferry Ministry, was brought once more before the French Parliament. It was only by a majority of four votes that it was decided not to relinquish it.

A short time after Paul Bert was appointed Governor. He died at his task. His successors, Constans, Richaud, Picquet, de Lanessan, and Rousseau, effected the pacification of the country and its

reorganisation. During the five years in which M. Paul Doumer (1897–1902) held office, the union of Indo-China was accomplished, and the era of great public works and railroads was inaugurated. M. Beau, then M. Klobukowski (1908), succeeded him. Annam has lately been disturbed by one or two small rebellions.

The King Than Thai, who had been chosen by the French on the death of Dong-Khan, was deposed. One of his sons, aged eight years, now reigns over the Annamese under the name of Jy-Su.

CHAPTER I

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF FRENCH INDO-CHINA

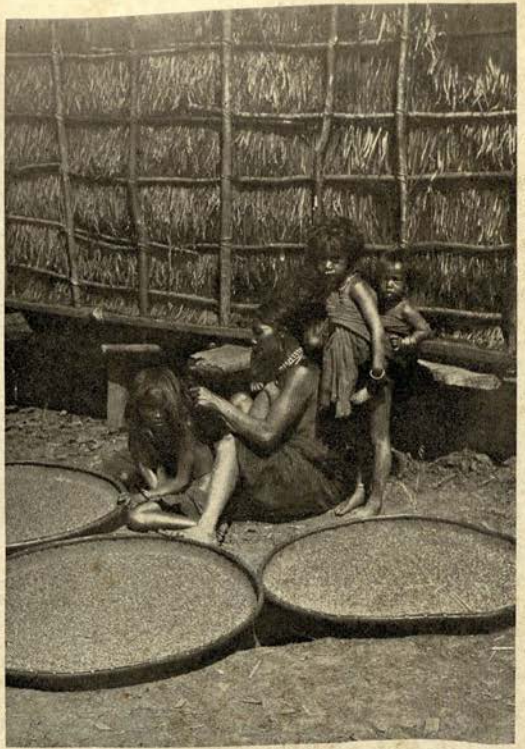
The send-off of our English and French friends : Arrival at Cap St. Jacques : First glimpse of the Annamese : Saigon : Adventurous driving : *Le tour d'inspection :* Public buildings and native dwellings : My first evening in the Tropics : European life in Saigon : Cholen : A crowded native thoroughfare

A FEW weeks after our marriage we got marching orders for Annam. This did not surprise us, for the natural fate of a French army doctor is a French colony. We were only too pleased that our destination was Annam rather than Martinique or Timbuktu! My husband had been offered a post by Dr. Roux at the Pasteur Institute of Nhatrang, and preferring bacteriology to other medical work, he accepted it gladly.

I had never heard of Annam up till then, but it was reassuring to learn that our bungalow was all ready for us on the coast in a picturesque country amidst an interesting population.

My family indeed was rather taken aback at the thought of our departure for such a distant, and to them unknown land, but nevertheless they looked on the bright side of things, while some of the inexperienced members even envied the novelty of my new

AN ANNAMESE WOMAN WITH HER CHILDREN
IN OUR GARDEN



A MOI WOMAN WITH HER CHILDREN

existence and the adventures we were likely to encounter. And this was perhaps the attitude of the greater proportion of our English friends. The love of adventure is still a strong national characteristic.

All this encouraging interest and sympathy enabled one to leave England with a fairly light heart. But what a different send-off we received from our friends in Paris! Though evidently proud of their largest and wealthiest colony, any allusion to our approaching sojourn out there was greeted with unconcealed looks and words of pity. One and all thanked Providence that their duty did not call them beyond the confines of their own country. Those whose acquaintance with Annam led me to expect exciting stories of exploration and vivid descriptions of the life and scenery limited themselves to the remark that perhaps we should not find the life as bad as we expected. The attitude was most disconcerting.

Even the doctors of the Paris Pasteur Institute, who with their wives came to bid us good-bye at the Gare de Lyon, took leave as if they might never see us again. Had not the wish to travel and to try new experiences in the East been very keen, my courage would assuredly have ebbed away.

Indeed, as the train glided out of the station and we settled down for the night, I found that the remarks on the platform had not been without effect, and began to shiver with nervousness and apprehension as to what might be in store for us. I pictured disasters and calamities of every description, and a

shudder went through me when I realised that there was no going back and that every minute was taking us farther into the vast unknown. I comforted myself with the recollection that the greatest drawback for a woman in such isolated spots as we were going to, is the difficulty, or even the impossibility, of obtaining the help of a doctor, but I was taking mine with me! I resolved to trouble no more, and let the shaking whirling train act on my brain as well as on my body, and in the consequent confusion of ideas I fell asleep.

The sun was pouring in at the carriage window when I woke the next morning; I was only just dressed when the train came to a standstill in Marseilles.

We spent that day hard at work shopping, no time to drive up to "Notre Dame de la Garde," whose tall spire is associated in the minds of all travellers with their last thoughts of home; no time to linger on the dirty but picturesque quays with their cosmopolitan crowd of idlers, and early the next morning we sailed.

Some colonial friends of my husband, who had just returned from Indo-China, came on board to see us off. These fortunately cheered us up by declaring that Nhatrang was the prettiest and healthiest spot in Annam.

We met some delightful people, both French and English, on the *Salazie*, and time and opportunity were not wanting to discuss the merits and characteristics of the two nations. The arguments were often long and lively, and in our peculiar position of French husband and English wife we received on board the

nickname of "entente cordiale." We were often cited as typical examples or called upon as umpires.

Though bridge and dancing help to make the days go quickly, the first glimpse of the East, as seen during the few hours spent at Port Said, Djibouti, and Colombo, are so impressive that before Singapore is reached, one feels as if one had been travelling a lifetime. After passing Singapore with its luxuriant vegetation, its crowded Chinese quarters, and its sampan-filled canals, we began to be impatient to see our new country, and to compare Saigon, the most important port of Cochin-China, with the English colonial towns we had visited on our way. And yet I was sorry that the journey was nearing its end, for we should probably meet none of our fellow-passengers again; and many of them, after this month's intimacy, were quite old friends. Still "en avant" was the predominant feeling, and we did not stop to indulge in vain regrets.

With the beautiful harbours of Colombo and Singapore still fresh in our memory, the prospect, when at Cap St. Jacques we left the open sea and turned into the Saigon River, was very disappointing. With the exception of this lofty ridge, which is used by the Europeans of Saigon as a health resort, a monotonous and absolutely flat stretch of country lies between the ocean and the town. As far as the eye can see on either side, there is no rising ground, and the long grass and water palms on the banks of the river are covered with mud. It is a dreary picture, and I therefore prepared myself for disappointment when Saigon should be reached. We could, owing to the flat surface, already

see the spires of the cathedral when we were still a long way off, and they appeared first at the stern of the boat, then at the bow, with the windings of the river. The moist heat rising from all the dank vegetation on the river banks was more trying than the higher temperature of Singapore, and did not serve to cheer us greatly. Impatient as we were, we could not fail to be distracted by the sampans which were moving up and down the river. Many had their huge cocoa-palm-fibre sails up, and in spite of a very light breeze they moved quickly. They are flat-bottomed, and are managed almost entirely by their rudders, which go deep into the water. This rudder is manipulated by a native squatting at the end of the boat. He holds it under his armpit, and bends to right or left as he steers. The sampans moving *up* the river were mostly of medium size, and were rowed by Annamese. They row standing, and are bent nearly double as they press forward their big and heavy oars. I was much surprised when I discovered that many of these rowers were not men but women, so alike are they in appearance and dress. Indeed, it was only after I had been several weeks in Annam that I was able to distinguish one sex from the other. Both men and women wear trousers and long tunics, and twist up their coarse black hair into a chignon. The figure is concealed by the long tunic, and the fact that the women's chignon is higher up on the head than that of the men, and that their tunics are longer, does not immediately strike the eye. The height of the men seldom exceeds 1 m. 60, and the women are slightly shorter. But in spite of their small stature and rather frail appearance, they wield their

heavy oars with ease and grace, and their swaying, well-balanced movements are pleasing to watch.

As we moved forward, the increasing number of the sampans warned us that we were approaching the town, and at last even the Colonials on board, who were familiar with these tortuous channels, began to break up their bridge parties and the ladies to put away their needlework. Suddenly, without warning, we found ourselves nearing a quay on which stood a white-dressed crowd. What a different reception from anything I had imagined! From my late experiences of other Eastern ports, I had merely anticipated the usual crowd of sampans rushing out of nowhere, anxious to sell their wares, but nothing further. Here, however, the arrival of a French steamer seemed to be an event, and all Saigon had turned out to welcome her. Some expected friends, others came in the hope of meeting acquaintances or as mere spectators. One was reminded of a fashionable garden-party, for the dresses and equipages were worthy of Paris itself.

The reason of the interest was not far to seek: at least two-thirds of the passengers on board were French officials destined for service in Indo-China. Still, the greater part of the spectators had come, we found, merely because it was the recognised thing in Saigon to do. We ourselves were not expecting to meet any one, and while my husband busied himself in having all our luggage transferred to the boat which was to take us to Nhatrang in two days' time, I was at liberty to watch the animated scene from the deck railing. Not only passengers, but sailors and waiters, seemed to find some chum, and the greetings, hand-

shakings and kisses of every degree of warmth, were most amusing to watch. Many ladies remained in their carriages, but so surrounded were they by one group of admirers after another, that it was but seldom one could catch a glimpse of their elegant Parisian toilettes.

Distracted by all this finery, I failed at first to notice any natives, but at last I was able to distinguish dark forms slipping in and out among the clusters of Europeans, and running lithely to and fro from the boat. I remarked that if by chance one of them happened to be on the ship's ladder as a European went down it, he crouched down and flattened himself against the ship's side so effectually that he really blotted himself from view.

But now, when my husband joined me on deck, my curiosity concerning the natives was satisfied, for he was followed by five or six Annamese and Chinese. They were all tailors, anxious to make him white clothes. The Annamese were rather smaller than the Chinese, and of a darker complexion. Their lips were red-brown and swollen with chewing the betel, and their black lacquered teeth made their mouths repulsive. Indeed, I found them most unprepossessing in appearance. It was truly astonishing to learn that such slight-looking men were capable of even greater endurance than our own powerful-looking, vigorous countrymen. They will row sampans for twenty-four hours at a stretch, only stopping for an occasional light meal of rice, or they will run with a rickshaw containing a European twice their size, for two hours, often covering thirty kilometres in that time.

But to return to the tailors now standing before us. One and all promised vociferously to have a dozen white suits ready in the next twenty-four hours if necessary. For the sake of peace, my husband ordered three from the most importunate of the band, though, in truth, he was already amply provided.

When we at length descended the ship's side and made our way across the quay, the crowd had begun to disperse, having mostly started on the so-called *tour d'inspection*, which is the favourite evening promenade.

Having left our luggage at the Pasteur Institute, where we were to spend the night, we decided to follow their example, and my husband beckoned for a conveyance. By this time there were none but covered malabars* left, and when one of these queer little vehicles drove up, I declared that there was not room for two full-grown people (Europeans) inside. However, we managed to squash into the tiny wooden box with its square holes for windows, and told the driver our destination. At first I thought that he had not understood, for we continued to stand stock-still. Then began a struggle for mastery. The native saïs† beat the ponies, pulled at the reins, made queer sounds, whether of cajolement or threats I could not tell, but nothing was of the slightest avail. The animals only set their feet wider apart and took on a still more

* *Malabar* was the term for any Indian in Indo-China; now it is also used for the closed carriage driven originally by these Indians. This small box-like vehicle on four wheels is the favourite carriage of the Annamese.

† *Saïs*, coachman; the name that the French have given to the native driver.

obstinate air—then began to back. It was small comfort to be told by my husband that this was a quite ordinary occurrence with native ponies, and that I should see many similar proceedings in the streets before evening, for we were backing slowly but surely on to a smart pair of horses harnessed to a neat little victoria. The two children sitting inside with their native nurse had apparently not noticed, and as for their driver, he watched impassively till the side of our malabar actually touched his horses' noses. Then he yelled out something, our saïs yelled something back, until finally two soldiers passing by came to the rescue, dragging our recalcitrant ponies a little way up the road. Then they suddenly dashed forward, nearly upsetting the soldiers, and clattered at full speed up the street. The saïs never tried to control them, rather he seemed to urge them on, glad to cover as much ground as possible while they were in that mood. Owing to his adroit steering and blood-curdling yells to passers-by, we had no accident, though we galloped through groups of natives squatting on the ground in the middle of the road, and whisked round corners without slackening our pace. We stopped once abruptly, all our harness having come to pieces, but as it was already mostly tied with string it did not take long to put it together again. Fortunately we had only to hold out for another ten minutes.

We found a bedroom prepared for us at the Institute, and after a hasty glance at the mosquito curtain (I learnt that, in future, that would be the most important piece of furniture in a house) we started out again. This time the Director lent us his own victoria, and

we were able to look about us instead of fixing anxious eyes on a horse's ears and wondering how long we still had to live.

Saigon is the capital of Cochin-China; together with Cholen it is the largest town of Indo-China, containing over 130,000 inhabitants.

The *tour d'inspection* took us down the chief streets, through the Botanical Gardens and round one of the prettiest districts in the neighbourhood. We were charmed with all we saw. Saigon is the Paris of the East. Manilla, which the Americans call "the Pearl of the Orient," may be more sanitary and show greater commercial activity, but it is neither so pretty nor so attractive as Saigon.

The town is well laid out on broad and artistic lines. The public buildings, such as the Cathedral, the theatre, and the Governor's Palace, are chefs-d'œuvre of architecture, and are set off to advantage by their position at the end of some broad avenue or grass-covered square. The wide and admirably kept streets, with trees planted on either side to give a welcome shade, are a striking feature of Saigon.

There is a conspicuous absence of Annamese buildings, whether pagodas, towers, or gates, though the town was a native centre long before the French arrived. In this it contrasts greatly with Hanoi, where native monuments abound, and with Hué, famous for its tombs of the kings and royal palace. On the other hand, we have here palatial European residences, built apparently regardless of cost. Everywhere an atmosphere of lavishness and luxury prevails.

In imitation of the French capital, the cafés over-

flow into the roads, and the little tables and chairs outside hotel and restaurant are never long unoccupied. Just as the Englishman's instinct is to make a tennis court, a polo ground or a golf links in the colonial post where fate may happen to call him, the "gais Parisiens," according to their national custom, love to sit and drink, laugh, and talk, and watch the passers-by, as on one of the Paris boulevards. And here they are on the broad pavement in the Rue Catinat in Saigon.

The Botanical Gardens are neither so large nor so varied in their collection of animals and plants as those of Singapore, but they are pretty and easier of access.

One of the roads along which we drove was planted with "flamboyants" (flame of the forest), at that moment in full bloom. It was a veritable blaze of colour; such brilliancy is beyond the imagination of anybody who has never been in the Tropics, masses and masses of red poppies would be pale by comparison. It was during that drive too that I made my first acquaintance with the tall cocoa-palm, the graceful bamboo and other tropical plants. When I saw their luxuriant growth my mind rushed back to the picture-books of my childhood, which had painted just such a profusion of vegetation. Far truer had they been than the caricatures of tropical plants which, seen later in conservatories, had proved so disappointing. Every leaf of the green foliage was quivering with life, and the love of light and heat was distinctly apparent.

But the natives on the road demanded our con-

tinual attention. The majority of them were returning home to a neighbouring village outside Saigon, after their day's work. Amongst them we saw interpreters with their hair cut short, wearing black turbans arranged in absolutely equal folds around their heads, black tunics, white linen trousers, and European shoes and socks. It is a curious fact that the boots of the Annamese, if they wear them at all, invariably look quite new, as though they had just come from the shop, and are also of the latest fashion.

Then there were the *nha qué* (peasants) in blue tunics, often so patched that there was scarcely any of the original blue left, and dirty unbleached linen trousers. These walked along the side of the road one behind the other. They were bare-footed, or if occasionally one was the proud possessor of a pair of Chinese heelless shoes, he carried them in his hand. In the other hand he often had an umbrella, and even when the sun had long disappeared, it was still carefully held up. The idea of a solitary individual walking solemnly along in the semi-darkness with his umbrella still above his head has never ceased to amuse me. Instead of a turban, these coolies had a handkerchief or dirty rag rolled carelessly around the head, showing an untidy chignon below.

The women, like the men, never walked two abreast; we met little groups of five or six hurrying homewards from some distant market. They carried their round baskets of plaited cane suspended to a bamboo over one shoulder, and in spite of the weight being all on one side of the body, they kept up a swinging gait. The free arm, bent sharp at the

elbow, swung vigorously to and fro to balance the load on the other side. In order to change the bamboo from one shoulder to the other, they slackened their pace, bent the head forward, and slid it over the back of the neck. I rarely saw a woman place her burden on the ground and pick it up again.

Native women of the richer class dashed past in rickshaws, some with a bright silk handkerchief tied under the chin, others whose chignon, adorned by native jewellery or pierced by a silver dagger, was too elaborate to permit of any head-dress.

As the last glimmers of sunset shot obliquely from the west, the little family groups of Annamese assembled outside their huts, and, squatting round bowls of fish and rice, partook of their evening meal. In cases where all was not ready and the mother was busy in its preparation, the father, or even the grandfather, was to be seen taking care of the children, rocking them in his arms or singing to them. The dim light lent poetry and glamour to the little circle.

With the coming darkness, the altars to Buddha inside the huts were lighted up, the rude sculptures or highly coloured pictures representing their deity being clearly distinguishable from the road. Bright specks of light in front of the images showed that tapers were burning, sending up fumes which were to give efficacy to the prayers of the inmates. Occasionally the incense was wafted across the road, and the scent mingling with all the other strange and attractive perfumes of a tropical evening added to the pervading feeling of enchantment. Little by little the family groups broke up and disappeared within. Here we

perceived a child rolling himself up in a mat for the night, just his top-knot of hair protruding from one side of it and his bare feet from the other, there we distinguished the faint outline of a woman swinging in a hammock, her baby in her arms. Finally, the man squatting at the door of the hut, smoking his last cigarette, would rise, remove the two bamboo poles which raised the door upwards and outwards during the day, and fasten it down. Thus in home after home silence reigned, except for the crying of a baby or the crooning of its mother. The darkness was now complete and I felt as if I was lost in some unknown world. It was a relief to drive back into one of the brilliantly lighted streets of Saigon.

We dined on the terrace of the Continental Hotel in the middle of the town, and though the dinner-hour was long past, many tables laden with liqueurs and cool drinks were still occupied. The street below was silent, though by no means deserted, for the rickshaws with their pneumatic tyres and the bare-footed coolies made no sound on the smooth surface. The silence was broken only by the orders shouted out to the Annamese waiters or the rickshaw coolies, and by the greetings or farewells of friends as they came or went.

There were all sorts and conditions of men, from the official playing cards or criticising the Government, to strangers like ourselves. But by far the greater number were residents of Saigon. These entered the hotel as if it belonged to them, moving about and talking with a lack of reserve which bordered on the insolent. They evidently lived far more in such public resorts than in their own homes, and as

they lolled at a table or loitered outside in the street, they coolly stared the passers-by out of countenance. They were men and women who from the moment they had set foot in the colony had thrown themselves into the spirit of the not too moral town. Freed from the restraints of a more conventional life at home, they had taken full advantage of the greater liberty of the Tropics, flinging themselves headlong into all the pleasures to be found there, learning indolence and extravagance, and heedless of any effort at self-control.

A little later, as we sped swiftly and silently back to the Institute, we saw the streets which in the daytime had been so full of light and colour under a new aspect. The trees were dark and black overhead and almost entirely shut out the moon and stars. The electric lights under the arch of branches sent fantastic shadows flying backwards and forwards, and shone on the perspiring backs of our rickshaw coolies, changing their dark skin to a gleaming white. During this short ride, thinking over the events of the day, I felt instinctively relieved, in spite of all the fascinations of this town, that our destination was only a modest little village beside the sea.

The next morning, my husband being engaged at the military hospital, Dr. Noc, the Director of the Institute, took some of the English passengers of our boat, myself among the number, through the various laboratories. We were shown the bacillus of plague, the skulls of rabid dogs, the room where hydrophobia is treated, and above all we witnessed the interesting sight of the extraction of venom from a poisonous

serpent. Dr. Noc performed the operation with much skill, but it was a very dangerous task and one would not desire to see it repeated. Calmette discovered here his serum against snake-bites, by which so many lives are now saved in all tropical countries.

We had intended doing some shopping after lunch, but found that all shops, banks, and business offices were closed between 11 A.M. and 2 P.M. This custom must be a great pecuniary loss to the town and is most inconvenient for those people who do not live in the immediate neighbourhood. It also entails much hardship on all shop assistants and clerks, who cannot for this reason leave their work before six or seven in the evening, when it is almost dark. Thus the day is ended without exercise or sufficient open air. It is true that the French in general do not care for exercise in the form of games, and the small section who play them, do so rather for the sake of health than out of enthusiasm. Moreover, the day's arrangement precludes even riding and shooting, and the free Saturday afternoon does not exist. The cause of the long siesta comes from the French habit of eating nothing for breakfast, which necessitates a big midday meal, after which in a hot climate one is indisposed for immediate work.

Directly after dinner on our second evening in Saigon we started to explore Cholen, the Chinese quarter of the town. As we approached it the streets began to get more and more crowded, and when we stepped out of the carriage into one of the central squares the mass of hurrying pedestrians was quite a wonderful sight. In Cholen, as in Canton and other Chinese cities, there is but little change between day

and night; work goes on almost without intermission. At the moment of our arrival every Chinese merchant was in the act of establishing a table or booth outside his shop, and as he called out his wares and rattled his drum there never seemed any lack of customers. An ever-flowing stream of Chinese advanced in either direction, the fat and comfortable-looking "Hausfrau" with her basket, into which she popped one disgusting-looking tart or sausage after another, the ragged coolie still covered with the paddy husks in which he had been working, or sometimes a whole Chinese family—father and mother and five or six very young children. In the case of numerous families like these, the two youngest were carried by the parents, while the others clung to their flowing tunics or wide trousers, and were continually tumbled over by other passers-by as they were dragged along. Then there were occasionally rich mandarins walking along singly or in groups, who simply glanced here and there at the booths but never stopped to buy anything. Their gorgeous tunics and silk trousers, their red-tasselled satin toques, their richly ornamented slippers and long well-groomed pigtails, often interwoven with a silken cord, mark them as a distinct class, far removed from their poorer compatriots. They move too in a leisurely manner, in striking contrast to the busy rushing crowd.

There was very little bargaining round the booths, the main object apparently being to "get on," and not a minute was lost in useless chatter. The streets were by no means silent however, for a continual low hum was distinguishable beneath the shouts of the salesmen. The Chinese are by nature great bargainers,

but in a foreign country they seem to practise their skill in this respect on the natives rather than on their own fellow-countrymen, who have come there with the same aim as themselves. The hope of all is to gain enough to return to their Fatherland and to pass their last days in comfort.

The booths were illuminated by globe-covered candles and Chinese lamps, on the chimneys of which little papers were fixed to protect the flame from the gusts of wind. This rather feeble light was improved by the big isinglass lanterns swinging over the shop doors. Most pedestrians carried a similar small one in their hands.

The stalls were chiefly laid out with articles for human consumption. We should have been ignorant of their nature, had not undeniable proof been furnished by the way the purchases were tried and tasted on the spot, and by the eager eyes and pleading whispers of the children as they pointed to some highly coloured dainty. There were heads of rabbits, feet of chickens, big jars of fruit in rainbow-tinted syrup, vegetables which were touched and examined by every passer-by, dog-meat sausages, and other obnoxious-looking things hanging from strings just above the table, about which I thought it safer to ask no questions. It was impossible to see whether they were animal, vegetable, or mineral. The smells at some of these tables, moreover, were most unpleasant. Cakes, jellies, and patties were also abundant, but in spite of the large choice I could not conquer my repugnance sufficiently to bring myself to purchase anything. The Chinese, however, evidently had no

such reluctance again and again, as fast as the owner of a stall could replenish the dish from the store under the table, the contents were seized and devoured. At last I thought I really had made a discovery of something fairly safe to eat—some pancakes turned out before my eyes and untouched by dirty hands; before venturing to taste one, however, I cautiously peeped inside the bowl from which the mixture was taken—ugh! the sight of some of the ingredients made me quickly change my mind.

Walking along the roads soon tired us, so difficult was it to avoid being jostled against the moving crowd, one and all of whom seemed bent on some purpose which admitted no delay. And space was limited, for the streets were more than half taken up with stalls and barrows. Yet by comparison with the narrow tortuous alleys of Canton, which I have seen since, Cholen comes back to me as a well-ordered, hygienic, Chinese centre. In the former town it is impossible to go in a rickshaw, as the streets are barely a yard and a half wide; even in a chair the difficulties are great, for, in spite of all the yells of the bearers, many a passer-by carrying a heavy load has a narrow escape of a fall in an unavoidable collision. The abominable stinks rising from the pools of stagnant water, the lack of light and air caused by the roofs almost meeting overhead, as well as the much denser crowd, make a stroll on foot such as we were taking in Cholen quite out of the question.

When tired of walking we went into the Chinese theatre. We had no interpreter, so could not gather up the threads of the story, but were told that it was

the third day of the piece, and that the final scene was eagerly expected.

By the time we once more found ourselves in the street it was nearly midnight, but notwithstanding the hour we made a hurried visit to a hardwood furniture and silk shop. I found it difficult to admire the famous furniture: it was too dark, solid, and heavy; even with cushions one could hardly imagine oneself comfortable in such chairs. There was no display of silk, and it needed persuasion before a merchant would divest each roll of its paper wrappings and spread it out. Chinese often seem to dislike parting with their wares —at any rate they show them off most reluctantly; how different from our European salesmen, who display goods of every shade and colour, both to tempt you and help you in your choice!

After a lovely drive back to Saigon, the cool night air fanning our faces, we reached the local steamer, which was due to sail in half an hour. Though we were tired out we decided to sit on deck till we should have started, for we were loath to shut ourselves up in a cabin. After the bustle and clamour of Cholen, the calm of the starry night, the noiseless movements of the broad river, were most welcome. Near by the outline of the quays could be distinguished by the electric globes, and farther up the river little lights shot out from the port-holes of a warship, making it look like some fiery monster. The sampans, so active in the day, were now tied together in even lines here and there against the banks. Some of them still had their fires alight, and occasionally we perceived a native, lantern in hand, walking across the attrap

roofs of the sampans, jumping lightly from one to the other till his own was reached. Not a breath in the air, all Nature seemed wrapped in meditation, and only from time to time the plaintive notes of a belated Annamese, whose boat drifted slowly down the stream, broke the stillness of the night.

CHAPTER II

LIFE IN AN ANNAMESE FISHING VILLAGE

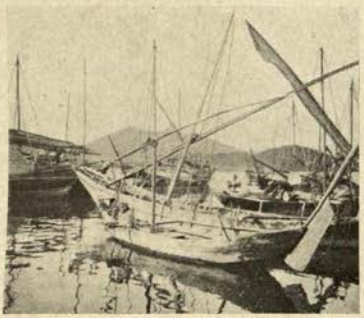
Miseries of a coast steamer : An ungraceful landing : Nhatrang : The native village : Fishing tactics : Our new home : Choosing native servants : Beginning of domestic worries : Fight with insects, damp, mould, native habits, &c. : Catering of native cook : The market : My neighbour's pigeons : Cooking practices : Daily routine

As the steamer pushed off from the quay at Saigon we left our quiet nook on the upper deck, more than ready for a good night's rest. Slumber, however, was not so easily gained. Before we attempted to undress we spent a good hour chasing mosquitoes. The boat was unprovided with mosquito curtains, and, having been anchored in the Saigon River three days, she was swarming with these torments. The cabins, unlike those on the luxurious *Salazie*, were small and stuffy, and there was no electric fan. My husband thoughtfully hoisted two trunks on to my berth, and my mattress on the top of them, so that, being on a level with the port-hole, I should get more air. That my feet were then raised higher than my head was a trifling matter; but it certainly was disappointing to find so little benefit from the new arrangement, for scarcely a breath came in from the port-hole after all, and my pillow was

soon wet with the perspiration running from my face and hair. The mosquitoes having collected again, it was necessary to keep one's arms under the sheet—such a detail may seem of no account, but it is real agony to anybody encountering great heat for the first time. Having put cotton-wool in my ears to deaden, if possible, the vibration of the engines and the noise of the steering-chain, we settled down to rest. No sooner, however, were the lights put out than I heard a strange scratching noise on my pillow quite close to my face. We turned on the electric light again, and saw a huge black-brown beetle about the size of my thumb. With a shriek, I had tumbled off berth, boxes, and all on to the floor. A hunt was instigated, and we discovered not one but many more. The creatures, besides being repulsive, were very agile; they ran up the curtains and into impossible cracks under the bed, evading time after time our well-aimed blows. We had armed ourselves with slippers, but it was not often we succeeded in squashing our prey. For my part, I preferred missing, for the sight of the white oozy mass of the flattened-out creature on the sole of my slipper was so disgusting. We soon found that as soon as one was despatched another appeared, and that we were engaged on an endless task.

It seems a silly thing for a woman to have to confess, but so overwrought was I with fatigue, heat, want of sleep, noise, and these obnoxious insects, that I lay down and indulged in a thorough good cry like a child. This somewhat relieved my feelings, and at last I fell asleep. No—not quite though,—for just as kind drowsiness was making

FISHING EXPERTS



FISHING-BOATS IN THE RIVER

BRINGING THE NETS TO LAND

A NOVEL MODE OF FISHING

me forget all my miseries, I was roused by a new noise above my head—chairs were apparently being hurled about the deck—and received a douche of cold dirty water, with which I discovered the sailors were swabbing down the deck. I called out to my husband, but he was already asleep, and I had not the heart to wake him. In spite of damp and dirt, therefore, I lay still, feeling quite unable to do anything for myself. Perhaps it was as well, for my damp clothes must have refreshed me; for at any rate, in spite of the extra noise, I fell sound asleep at last.

Our steamer was almost as unpleasant by day as by night, the accommodation being so small; one bathroom had to serve for the ladies, we were packed like sardines for meals, and there was no room to walk up and down on the deck outside.

We decided to spend the next night on deck instead of in our cabin, so soon after dinner we fetched our mattresses and installed them in a corner where there was little noise and a good breeze. We slept soundly and felt entirely refreshed when we woke up after nine hours of oblivion.

It was about five o'clock when I raised myself and gazed around. A most glorious scene lay before me. I have never forgotten the enchantment of that awakening, the delight with which I realised that this was the environment of our future home. We had left the flat country of Saigon; high hills and mountains rose on all sides, for the most part covered with dense forest. These looked dark and gloomy against the bright green grass, and stories of Annam's tigers and the mysteries of the jungle rushed to my mind. No

trace of humanity was visible; the mountains stretched for miles and miles inland, one chain behind the other as far as the eye could see. The sun being still on the horizon, there were long dark shadows across the slopes, and the light had not lost the softness of the first hours of the day. The glare which mixes all the tints of green, blue, and purple into one hard tone was not yet apparent. What excursions might we not make into those silent woods! Surely the discovery of new treasures and fresh delights awaited us! Altogether ignorant of the difficulties of tropical jungle, I imagined exploration could be carried on along shady paths, with beautiful flowers and grassy spots on either hand, such as one finds in English forests.

The water of the little bay which we were now entering danced and sparkled in the first rays of morning light; the reflections, instead of being trying, as they would be later on in the day, had the warm azure blue tones of the Mediterranean. To our right was a large hilly island, the "Ile de Tré," which protected the bay from the storms of the ocean; round about it were many other little green islets, which broke the monotony of the long line of sea horizon.

While I was still gazing enraptured at this scene, a rolling, clanking sound warned us that the anchor was being dropped; at the same moment my husband came on deck. He was as pleased as I was at the outlook, but the hard work entailed by packing had kept him all this time too hot and busy to enjoy it. I gave him my place and ran down to dress and do my share of packing. The last half-hour before leaving a ship for good is not pleasant to remember.

You cannot pack your trunk while it is under the berth, because there is no space to open the lid; to pull it half-way out is no better; to pull it right out leaves you no room to stand; the small size of the cabin and the weight of the trunk make it very difficult to lift bodily on to the berth. Your conscience will not allow you to leave your things behind or push them through the port-hole, as you are tempted to do in the intolerable heat and aggravation of the moment.

By the time I got into the fresh air again our luggage had been hauled up on deck and was ready for landing. A boat was coming towards the ship from the little yellow beach, and we now faintly perceived, with the aid of glasses, a series of low huts like ant-hills, apparently built on the very edge of the sea.

No natives in sampans surrounded us, trying to sell their fruit, eggs, and fish to passengers or crew, as is generally the case when a mailboat anchors in port. No women came screaming and gabbling to the ship's ladder with offers to take us ashore, All was as silent as in the open sea. On this particular occasion we were the only passengers to land.

Soon the boat we had seen approaching came alongside, and M. Schein, the veterinary surgeon of the Pasteur Institute, introduced himself to us. Our luggage was let down into a junk to go to Nhatrang by sea, and we accompanied M. Schein to Cua-Bê, from whence we should have a five-mile drive to our destination.

Cua-Bê does not even boast of the few planks which act as a landing-stage in most fishing villages along

the coast, and to get ashore we had to be carried on the backs of natives through the breakers. I was seized hold of by a man not much more than half my size or weight, and though he bore me with ease, I was very thankful to find myself once more on firm ground without having broken his back or taken an involuntary bath.

As we struggled up the beach, sinking at every step into the now burning sand, all the village came out to watch us. From the low colourless huts proceeded grave, wrinkled old men, women with open eyes and mouths, and numbers of little naked children. Boys as well as girls, over the age of seven, carried, as a rule, a still younger brother or sister, not in their arms, but on one hip. These wee mites had often to contort themselves to one side in order to make their hips large enough to seat the baby, who was frequently not much smaller than his nurse.

The village appeared much less well-to-do than the majority of those round Saigon. The squalid homes, the sores and ophthalmia of the natives, were a proof of misery and poverty, though their spirits did not seem much affected by their deplorable condition.

The crowd did not venture too close at first, but when I held out my bag, twenty pairs of small hands were eagerly stretched forward, and it was carried in triumph up the beach. Soon all our belongings were seized, the very umbrella that protected me from the sun was snatched from me. The children were delighted with this new employment, and even those who were nearly blind screwed up their eyes and danced round as happily as the rest. But it was

pathetic to see them, and to realise the terrible results of ignorance.

Two American cradle-carts were awaiting us at the top of the beach. This type of cart is the most useful for Annam, where the roads are often rough and little better than bullock-tracks. The carts are suspended on chains, so that instead of being jolted over every stone or rut, you are simply rocked from side to side. Their light weight enables the native ponies to drag them through long tracts, where the wheels sink deep into the mud or sand, and over plank and branch bridges which would scarcely bear a heavier vehicle. It is true that one never feels very safe in a cradle-cart, and I found it difficult to mount to the swinging platform and take my place firmly on the narrow seat. The ponies behaved no better than at Saigon, and before we reached Nhatrang I had discovered many of their tricks.

Nhatrang (the white house) is a fishing village of about three thousand inhabitants. It is the European capital of the Province of Khanhoa, but the white colony does not number more than twenty or thirty persons. Besides the Resident and provincial officials, the staff of the Pasteur Institute, and two or three colonists, there are few permanent residents. The fortnightly mail service brings a good many Europeans through the village, who stay a day or two before starting for the interior—Government surveyors, agents of the Public Works Department and of the Customs, &c. There was little or no accommodation for travellers when we arrived at Nhatrang, the "Hotel and Restaurant," a broken-down bungalow kept by a Chinese,

offering no attractions beyond the words on the board.

Nhatrang is situated at the opening of a valley; the land and sea breezes are permanent, and cool the atmosphere even when the temperature is high. Good drinking-water is obtainable from wells, as it filters through successive layers of sand. So comparatively healthy is this spot, that my husband never yet attended a case of malaria or dysentery among the Europeans who remain constantly at the post. Those, however, who are obliged to go inland, even for a short time, often return suffering from one or the other, sometimes from both. The healthy condition of Nhatrang is due in great measure to the segregation of whites and natives; the importance of this hygienic rule can never be too greatly emphasised in a tropical climate.

The Europeans have built their bungalows along the shore, quite close to the sea, while the natives occupy the right bank of the river for a quarter of a mile inland and a strip of land between the sea and river. This strip of land forms a natural jetty and is a site much envied by the fishermen. But though it may be favourable for their trade, it is not so for permanent residence, for while the area of *terra firmâ* varies, the population is ever increasing. Just at the present time this jetty is about half a kilometre long, twenty metres wide, and nevertheless contains over five hundred inhabitants. During the high tides of October and November, the sea often washes right over the ridge into the river, and many huts are carried away. This never deters the owners

from rebuilding; they simply crowd into the huts left standing, and, as soon as the tides subside, start rebuilding on the old spot. The jetty runs to a point where the river joins the sea. Here there is a ferry, and numbers of natives, mostly women with their goods for the different markets, are continually being rowed to and fro at any time between sunrise and sunset. It is amusing to watch the boat coming to land. The women squat at the bottom of the sampan, and only a jumble of hats and baskets is to be seen. As they lift their trousers and step gingerly into the water, they look hot after their efforts to extricate themselves and their goods. Half a dozen more women than the boat will really hold usually squash themselves in at the last moment before the start, in spite of the ferryman's feeble protest, which they drown in a storm of abuse. How can one poor man control so many women, especially women who have such shrill voices and extensive vocabularies as the Annamese? All natives, both men and women, can swim, so that, although there may be many an unpremeditated bath, there is seldom any fatal accident. But woe to the ferryman who, by upsetting his boat, is the cause of their losing an orange or a few handfuls of rice!

The sandbank swarms with children; dozens of little naked forms may always be seen lying at the edge of the water, or swimming and splashing in the warm sea.

The village displays its greatest animation in the early afternoon, when the fishing-boats come home, Profiting by the land breeze which blows in the evening, the fishermen sail out to sea; they fish all night

with torches and nets, returning the next day by means of the sea breeze. There is always a plentiful supply of fish. As soon as the boats ground they are besieged by a chattering crowd of women, who wade into the water, and baskets upon baskets are rapidly filled and carried away. It is not a rare thing for a shark to be caught in the fishing-nets, which is considered a great prize. It is dragged on to the sand, and a woman is chosen with some ceremony to cut up the carcass. She wields her long knife dexterously, delivering each slashing stroke with a precision which shows she is accustomed to the work. No sooner is the monster divided, than the various pieces are seized by the women standing round, and placed with other choice morsels in their baskets.

Most of the fish is conveyed inland, a great quantity to the Citadel, which is the Annamese capital and the residence of the great mandarins of the Province.

Both men and women act as bearers to this populous native centre. They tear along the road at a pace which appears extraordinary when one considers it is maintained over a distance of twelve kilometres. They never pause, never turn round, and we, even when driving, have much ado to keep up with them for any length of time.

But I have not yet described to you our entrance into the European quarter of Nhatrang or into our own little bungalow, which was henceforth to become our home for two years and more. From afar we had recognised the Pasteur Institute—a prominent landmark, for it is the only two-storied building besides the Post Office and Dr. Yersin's house. Five

minutes' drive from the Institute brought us in front of the little bungalow. It was small, but this was more than made up for by its beautiful situation on the sea-shore. We were unable to persuade our pony to go through our gateway, so we alighted on the road, crossed the garden and mounted the half-dozen cement-covered steps on to the verandah.

The house was of brick with a red-tiled roof. It consisted of three fair-sized rooms provided with a large door in the centre of each wall, which took the place of windows. A dressing-room at one end and two tiny closets for refrigerator, provisions and groceries at the other, completed the building. The whitewashed walls and white cement floors gave the house a very clean, if monotonous appearance, but a touch of colour was lent by the doors, which were painted light green. The verandah round the house, with the low, slanting roof, protected the rooms from sun and rain, and enabled us to keep the doors continually open. My experience soon taught me to choose as the most comfortable seat in the house, that between opposite doors, for the perpetual draught kept one comparatively cool. Ours is the typical European dwelling of Indo-China, and is very suitable for a tropical climate.

The kitchen, stables, and servants' quarters are built away from the house, a few yards from the side entrance; this is for many reasons a convenient arrangement; all the doors being of necessity open, the sound of servants chattering would otherwise be a continual source of annoyance, and we were also spared the smoke and heat of the kitchen.

The first few weeks were so taken up with insect troubles, and the harm done to all our worldly possessions by a hot damp climate, that I did not notice the deficiencies of my native servants. Before we had been in the house two days, ants ran riot in my sugar, cakes, and in fact all my eatables; and a week had not passed before I found moths and cockroaches in the cupboards among our clothes, a scorpion in our bedroom, not to mention the common pests of mosquitoes and flies. I took my husband's advice and set the four legs of our sideboard in tins of vinegar, which prevents ants ascending them, but this did not prevent the advance of thousands in a few seconds if a little sugar happened to be spilt on the floor. Much of my time was spent in following these ant-trails from room to room in search of the object which had attracted them; if not sugar, it was some dead insect, a beetle under the cupboard, or a fly in some crack in the wall. The advantage of the whitewashed walls, which enabled us to see our enemies so quickly, was immediately apparent.

To prevent an inroad from snakes, we found it necessary to transplant the bushes which grew too close to the house, for they served as a hiding-place for these reptiles. This measure was also very effective to keep out the scorpions. The damage done by moths and cockroaches was minimised by packing up all clothes not in use in tin-lined cases. I was obliged to paste paper round the openings and over the keyholes, or a small cockroach would assuredly introduce itself, and when next I went to take out my best dress, it would be one mass of holes and stains, the

creature having laid its eggs in all the most conspicuous places. The clothes in use have to be laid out in the sun at least once a fortnight, and books frequently wiped and shaken if their bindings are not to be irremediably spoiled.

The greatest improvement we made was to protect our bed- and dressing-rooms by placing wire gauze across windows and doors. We were thus enabled to dress and undress without being continually bitten by mosquitoes. It had this further great advantage, that we could sleep at night and lie down in the afternoon without the need of a stifling mosquito curtain.

Meantime the difficulties with my servants were increasing. When we had first entered the house, we had been greeted by five natives. All had simultaneously gone down on their knees, placed the palms of their hands on the floor, touched the ground with their foreheads, stood upright again, and then repeated the same movements again and again. I was rather taken aback, but my husband told me that this was the ordinary salutation to a European or a mandarin of high rank. They were cooks, "boys," gardeners, &c., who had heard of our arrival and wanted to place themselves in our service. At first I had taken them for young lads, then for women, and could hardly believe they were grown men with wives and families. They were dressed in short white cotton jackets and trousers, as are all natives in European service. Their soft eyes and submissive appearance inspired me with the hope that they might prove easy to manage, in spite of their sex. But I found I was mistaken!

We chose out three, one as cook, another as boy, and a third as gardener; with a native soldier who was to act as orderly to my husband, we thought we should have sufficient. When there are too many, the result is that the "boy" hands over all his household work to some under-boy, while he sleeps or gambles, and that the dinner is cooked by some little scrap of a fellow merely engaged to run messages. Though my knowledge of housekeeping was small, I nevertheless felt confident of my capabilities and started my duties with a light heart.

The first shock came when I discovered that all the glass, tea and kitchen cloths that I had given them from my nice new stock of household linen were destroyed or in rags at the end of the first month. The glass-cloth had been used for polishing boots, a duster acted as turban on the head of my boy (this did not prevent its being used for drying plates), and many had been lost or sold. After that experience I trusted each boy with two cloths only, which had to be washed and shown to me clean every morning. I prevented them from letting dirty buckets down into the well from which our drinking water came, by providing a pump and covering the well, but there were some things one could not foresee and many a surprise awaited me. If only I could have made them understand me things might have been easier, but I was quite incapable of turning my classic French into the slangy language which was the only sort of French they knew. Sometimes I felt desperate at what I could not help considering their stupidity, but fortunately the comic side of it all appealed to me

irresistibly, or with the heat and aggravation I really think I should have gone off my head.

My cook was the cause of my greatest worries. For instance, I found that my provisions from England disappeared extremely fast; being put on my guard, I noticed that when I gave him out groceries from my pantry in the morning, he contrived to unlatch the window on the inside, and no sooner had I carefully locked the door, than he as carefully climbed in by the unlatched window. Every day it was necessary to give out in small instalments the coal, sugar, &c., wanted for the different meals, or I was most audaciously robbed.

My cook went to market every day, but instead of paying him for what he bought there, we found it better to give him seven shillings a week and demand three courses for lunch and the same for dinner. This plan succeeded admirably, and from that moment I never attempted to order our meals. The cook soon found out our tastes, and I was saved a good deal of trouble. Of the seven shillings we gave him, he probably made a profit of half, for all the market produce was ridiculously cheap. Soles in season cost twopence each, a dozen eggs threepence, a big bunch of bananas a penny, a fowl sevenpence. Besides that, my cook hit upon many devices for supplementing what I gave him. One day a lady, a neighbour of ours, came to see me in great distress, saying that, while she and her husband had been away, nearly all her pet pigeons had disappeared. She had left twenty-two, and only three were there to greet her on her return. As she spoke, I remembered that pigeons had

frequently appeared on our table of late, and was guiltily convinced of their fate! In a later conversation with this lady, she happened to mention her menu of the evening before. It was, to my astonishment, the same as my own, and on comparing notes we discovered that for some time past one of our cooks had operated for both households, while the other took a holiday! This, however, was a less tragic event than the disappearance of the pigeons, as neither of us had really suffered by the arrangement.

I tried to train my servants in good habits and to teach them to do things in European fashion, but it was very often a case of running my head against a brick wall. They could never be persuaded, for example, to wash up the crockery *on* the table in preference to *under* it, or to clean the silver and mend the linen anywhere but on the floor. A nice new table offered them no attractions except occasionally to sleep on. Their manner of ironing the linen scarcely bears relation. Their custom was to fill their mouths with water, and squirt it over all the parts that were too dry. A bowl of water, with a leaf as sprinkler, which I suggested instead, and indeed put ready for them, they would utterly disdain. An Annamese was never yet known to use a mechanical contrivance when he could do without it. He will draw a cork out of a bottle with his teeth rather than take a corkscrew, or put coal on the fire with his hands in preference to a shovel. In places such as these, where no carpenter or plumber is available, these primitive methods are often convenient, but sometimes the mania for them exceeds all bounds. One day I happened to go into

the kitchen and surprised my cook forming his rissoles by rubbing them up and down his bare body with the palms of his hands! Even when he saw me, he continued his work with the utmost complacency. Needless to say, rissoles were omitted from our menu from that day forth. I had no appetite for several days, for I did not know what similar methods might not be practised. I had already heard of a worse discovery being made about another cook. He had iced some cakes, ornamenting them so artistically that his mistress asked him how he had managed it. With a smile at the compliment, he raised his hand and pointed to his mouth, at the same time bending his head and making a hissing sound through his teeth!

It was moreover rather annoying to have a cook who would sometimes completely disappear, either for one day or even for two or three. And when, as occasionally happened, people dropped in to some meal during his absence, my consternation may be imagined!

However, most of these troubles occurred during our first six months in the country; before the end of that time, I had changed all my servants and engaged others, who were better trained and whom we still have with us.

One day was spent in much the same fashion as another at Nhatrang, varied only by surprises and shocks such as I have suggested, which prevented monotony. We used to get up at 6 A.M. and bathe in the sea before the sun was too hot. With the water warm, the atmosphere cool at this hour, it is one of the delightful experiences of the Tropics; very different

from that of a bathe on a fashionable crowded beach. To wait an hour for a bathing-machine, to enter into a dirty, stuffy, uncomfortable compartment, to shiver for ten minutes in icy water, to dress under impossible circumstances, to feel cold, sticky and wretched for several hours afterwards, is an enjoyment difficult to appreciate, having once tried sea-bathing in a hot climate. Sharks only lend the necessary spice of excitement.

After breakfast, I often used to accompany my husband on his ride or drive to see some patient in the neighbourhood. At 8 A.M. he went to the Pasteur Institute, and I gardened, sewed, &c., till we met again at 12 for lunch. At about 5 P.M. my husband was home for good, and we went out driving, shooting, or boating on sea or river. Happily we had plenty of forms of exercise, for there was little society and we had to depend upon ourselves for our own amusements. Hobbies, moreover, soon sprang up, of which the chief were photography and collecting, but both required much patience under adverse circumstances. To illustrate: You go into a terrifically hot dark room, you are devoured by mosquitoes, you have a difficulty to obtain sufficient running water, your ice melts too quickly and drowns your developer, and you return to light and air only to find that drops of perspiration from your forehead have fallen into the middle of your best plates. Worse still, the gelatine has sometimes dissolved, leaving the plates clean transparent pieces of glass. On such occasions, great self-control is necessary.

In spite of the difficulties of making a collection,

we were able to enrich the Museum by two pheasants, and with other new birds and mammals, which show that our efforts in this direction have not been entirely without result; yet, here again, we have had disappointments enough to damp the ardour of any amateur.* A native engaged to shoot a certain mammal goes off with the gun, and we see him no more; another entrusted to prepare a porcupine, steals half the quills, or throws away the skull. . . . One day my husband brought back some much-prized bird at the end of a long and hot day's shooting; after a bath and a change he called for it in order to skin it: it was brought to him—plucked! The cook had prepared it for our dinner together with the snipe and quails!

* These are the new species determined up till now, the specimens of which are at the Natural History Museum of London:

1. Birds:
Dryonastes vassali, Ogilvie Grant.
Cissa gabriellæ, Ogilvie Grant.
Gennæus annamensis, Ogilvie Grant.
Crocopus annamensis, Ogilvie Grant.

2. Mammals:
Hylobates gabriellæ, Oldfield Thomas. (Gibbon.)
Presbytis margarita, Elliot. (Monkey.)
Nycticebus pygmæus, Bonhote. (Lemur.)
Tupoia concolor, Bonhote. (Tree-shrew.)
Sciurus leucopus vassali, Bonhote. (Squirrel.)
Funambulus rufigenis fuscus, Bonhote. (Squirrel.)
Lepus vassali, Oldfield Thomas. (Hare.)

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CHAPTER III

A TROPICAL PASTEUR INSTITUTE

Influence of Pasteur's discoveries on tropical medicine : The origin of research work : One of Pasteur's pupils : Yersin's discovery of the plague-bacillus : His search for a site and foundation of the present Institute : Its work and organisation : Suoigiau : A rubber plantation : Mosquitoes and malaria : The Institute's cattle : Natives' distrust of European doctor : A shark's victim : Difficulties in treatment of native patients : Escape of a one-legged man : Expressions of gratitude after recovery : A thanksgiving ceremony : Trials of research work in the Tropics

THE name of Pasteur is connected in the minds of many people solely with the terrible disease of hydrophobia, and Pasteur Institutes with its treatment. It is true that the discovery of a cure for rabies was one of Pasteur's greatest triumphs, and by it he has saved thousands of people from a most horrible death. Yet neither this, nor the arrest of the silkworm disease, nor the cure of anthrax by vaccination, are his only credentials to fame. He was above all the pioneer of research work, and the marvellous results now obtained from the study of microbes are due almost entirely to him. The investigations which he began alone are now being carried on by all nations in all countries. Lister, Bruce, Laveran, and Ross, whose

DOCTOR YERSIN'S HOUSE

THE VERANDAH OF THE PASTEUR INSTITUTE

names will always be connected respectively with the antiseptic treatment of wounds, sleeping sickness, malaria — these men and numbers of others acknowledge that their discoveries were stimulated by Pasteur's example.

To these famous names should be added that of Dr. Yersin, now director of the Pasteur Institute of Nhatrang, who was one of Pasteur's first pupils. After studying under the great master for some years at the Pasteur Institute in Paris, he left for the East. While in Tonking the terrible plague epidemic of 1894 broke out in Hongkong and Canton. He obtained permission from the French Government to go there and arrived when the plague had already claimed thousands of victims among the Chinese.

Dr. Yersin was allowed to establish a small laboratory in a hut within the precincts of the hospital, and in the very midst of plague infection he set to work. The first thing that struck him when visiting the wretched overcrowded huts of the natives was the number of dead rats. He was told that this rat mortality was a well-known forerunner of plague. Yersin at once examined their blood under the microscope and found that their disease was the same as that of the natives. In the bubonic tumours —the great characteristic of plague—he discovered immense numbers of an unknown bacillus. This he succeeded in cultivating. Healthy rats and mice were inoculated with this culture; they rapidly showed typical plague symptoms and died. The bacillus of plague was discovered.

Yersin had no sooner obtained this result than he

began to search for the probable medium of infection between rat and man. Ultimately he found that the infection was carried by fleas, of which there was an abundance owing to the hot climate and the filthy dwellings of the natives.

Now famous, he asked for funds to establish an Institute in French Indo-China, where he might not only prepare the anti-plague serum, but continue his other bacteriological work. He was convinced that there was a vast field open to research in the Tropics, and that the study of microbes would lead to greater results here than in Europe. His request granted, he began to look out for a favourable site.

Annam is a narrow band of territory forming the eastern boundary of Indo-China. It is almost entirely made up of the eastern slope of the "Annamitic Chain" which runs right through the colony from north to south. Yersin had been one of the first explorers of the interior, and though he had discovered the Langbian Plateau, which was favourable in many respects, he deemed it too much cut off from civilisation till roads were made. He was obliged, therefore, to confine himself to the plain. He might have joined forces with Dr. Calmette, who had established a laboratory at Saigon, but he realised that horses and cattle, of which he would need a great quantity, would be dearer to buy and to keep in a town.

This scientist therefore determined to settle in one of the little villages along the coast, opposite one of the beautiful sheltered bays of which Annam can justly boast. Nhatrang answered his requirements. It was a small village, healthy for Europeans, with plenty of

cattle and horses, pasturage easily obtainable a short distance inland, and with the mail-boats north and south calling once a fortnight.

When we arrived there in 1904, the new permanent building of the Institute was just finished. The first story was devoted to the laboratories of Dr. Yersin, my husband, and the veterinary surgeon, the ground floor to the accountant's study and all the rooms for weighing, bleeding, and treating of cattle. Close by were the different sheds for the ice machine, photography, and for the storing of serum; also the cages for the monkeys, guinea-pigs, and rats, and the stables for the horses and cows used by the staff. Farther away were those for animals under treatment. The manufacture of anti-plague and anti-rinderpest serum requires a far greater number of animals than can be kept at Nhatrang, where, the soil being sandy, all the forage for the animals has to be cut and brought by coolies from some distance off morning and evening. Large reserves are therefore kept in the Ile de Tré and at Suoigiau, a spot fifteen miles inland, where grass is plentiful.

Suoigiau (or, as it is called on maps, "Concession Yersin") is a large grant of land given to Dr. Yersin by the colony on condition that it should be cultivated.

Yersin first grew tobacco, then coffee, later coca for cocaine, and, although the results of each of these plantations were very successful, all have now been given up for the cultivation of rubber-trees (*Hevea bresilensis*). They have already begun to yield, and the plantation produces more than a ton of rubber a year, and provides an income of about £500 for the Institute.

There are two Europeans living at this plantation, M. Pernin, who is in charge of the cattle and horses, and M. Vernet, a chemist who superintends the cultivation of the rubber-trees. The house of the latter is fitted up with large laboratories containing all the newest appliances for the production and preparation of rubber.

Dr. Yersin, by these successive experiments, has given undeniable proofs of the varied capacity of the Annamese soil and climate. He has endowed the colony with new industries.

Unlike Nhatrang, Suoigiau is extremely unhealthy; its reputation even among the Annamese is such, that the chief difficulty of the plantation is a lack of coolies. The whites suffered as much as the natives until three years ago, when the two Europeans on the Institute staff completely protected their houses with wire gauze. The effect of this measure was immediate; since then, neither they nor their wives have had fever, though the mortality among the natives remains the same as before.

It is now almost universally acknowledged that malarial fever is given by mosquitoes. There are different species more or less dangerous, but the most common in this district belong to the genus *Anophelinæ*, which are the worst kind. All mosquitoes require water in which to lay their eggs, and as they never fly a long distance, an absence of water means an absence of mosquitoes. It is very difficult in general to get rid of all water, but the situation of the Europeans at Nhatrang along the sea-shore, where there is a sandy soil, little vegetation, and no ponds or fresh water in

the near neighbourhood, should enable them to be entirely free. Great care must nevertheless be exercised, for an uncovered well, a tank of water-cress, or even the earthenware basin under a flower-pot, is sufficient breeding-ground for any number of mosquitoes. At Suoigiau all such precautions are useless; the surrounding rice-fields are continually filled with water, and the luxuriant vegetation makes the use of petroleum or of any system of draining impracticable. Other means of protection against mosquitoes must be found.

The Anopheles, as a rule, only come out after dark, so all that is necessary is to avoid being bitten after that hour. Still one can hardly expect a man to have dinner at 5 P.M. and to be in bed under a mosquito curtain at 6 all the year round. Therefore the only reasonable solution is to have the whole house protected by wire gauze. It is astonishing that people do not adopt this system more frequently; the through draught is not diminished, the irritation from bites is avoided, and above all, it is the only way of being preserved from the worst disease of the tropics.

The cattle are transferred to Nhatrang and back again as they are wanted for the different laboratory purposes. Those for the serum can only be used for a few months at a time; they must then go back to be fattened up again. The cattle which provide milk for the staff have also to be changed frequently, as native cows give very little milk after their calves are three months old, and even during that time not more than a pint a day. It is difficult to obtain that. The Annamese neither drink milk themselves

nor give it to their children, and have therefore to be taught the art of milking. They do not think it necessary to put the milk in a clean pail, nor to wash their hands. The cows for their part resent the treatment and have to be firmly tied up before it is possible to milk them. When my two bottles arrive in the morning I have to see the milk is well boiled before I dare use it in tea or coffee.

The cattle on the island of Tré, allowed to roam at will over its large and mountainous surface, return almost to their savage state. No European lives there, but from time to time Dr. Yersin or my husband visits the island to check their numbers. The Annamese herdsmen, warned a day or two beforehand, will then collect them and drive them down to the shore. So wild are they, that their transference to Suoigiau or Nhatrang involves a certain amount of risk for the coolies. Many contrivances and precautions are necessary in order to ship them. They are not brought the whole way by boat; about a mile from the shore they are pushed overboard. The long swim to land so tires them that when they at last arrive panting and blowing they stand quite still on the beach and are driven into their sheds fairly easily. Sometimes they are so exhausted that they can hardly drag themselves out of the water.

My husband was the first doctor to practise at Nhatrang. The Europeans naturally hailed his arrival with great thankfulness, but the natives, whose diseases were likely to be of more scientific interest, were loath to take advantage of his services. For many months only those on the verge of death

were brought to him, that is to say, when the Annamese or Chinese doctors had given them up.

But a change came at last. A man from Cua-Bê was brought to my husband bleeding to death and in terrible agony. He had been out fishing at night as usual, and towards morning he and several companions jumped into the water to help with the net. Astride on bamboos, as the custom is, they distributed themselves at different points to drag it towards the boat. Suddenly they were terrified at the sight of a huge shark coming swiftly towards them. It was chasing some fish, and both pursuer and pursued swam full tilt against the net. The shark, baffled of his prey, turned at right angles, passed the first two men without touching them, but darting at the third, caught him by the leg. The man struggled and fought desperately, while the shrieks and yells of the men in the boat evidently frightened the monster, for after a few seconds it let go its hold and disappeared. But the jaw of the shark had already done its work. When the injured man was hauled into the boat, it was found that two enormous pieces of flesh had been torn off his leg. With all haste he was rowed to land and carried to the medical authority of the village. The Annamese doctor gave no hope; he had seen many such cases and was fully aware that even if he succeeded in staying the flow of blood, the victim of the tiger and the shark always succumbed later. He knew nothing of blood-poisoning, and sought no such explanation; the superstitions connected with these monsters were sufficient to account for the death of any individual who came into contact with them. The

wounded man was therefore laid on a palanquin, and, accompanied by his mother and some of his comrades, was brought to Nhatrang.

My husband saw that the leg must be amputated at once. Such a proceeding had never been heard of by the Annamese, and they were in consternation. The mother, quite overcome, threw herself down on the ground in front of my husband, imploring him to save the life of her son but not to cut off his leg. She would listen to no explanations, weeping hopelessly and continuing to prostrate herself in despair. Such behaviour was quite extraordinary in an Annamese woman, for even in the face of death the natives always maintain their sang-froid; in cases where there is really cause for agitation, they move and speak as monotonously as ever. It was pitiable to see her, but there was no time to be lost; my husband was at last obliged to bundle her out of the room. As she would not consent to the operation, and declared that she was the only relative of the patient, my husband was obliged to ask the consent of the patient himself, who, understanding that it was a case of life and death, acquiesced.

Meanwhile the two Infirmary boys, affected by this impressive scene, the terrible stream of blood, the cries and screams of the mother, and by the helpless and hindering dismay of the coolies, quite lost their heads. One pressed the chloroformed handkerchief nearly down the patient's throat and almost suffocated him; the other began to finger the sterilised cotton-wool, and was forthwith kicked out of the Infirmary. In spite of all these adverse circumstances,

the operation was carried out successfully. I happened to arrive on the spot when it was just finished. I had waited lunch for my husband for two hours, and at last I thought I would go to the Infirmary and see if he was there. Through the open door I perceived a little crowd round the operating-table, and natives holding the limbs of a naked form stretched out on it. My husband called out to me cheerfully to come and see a hard piece of work—the amputation of a leg—but I retired still farther at his words. As all was finished and the bandages were being placed, I sat down on the verandah steps to wait until we could return home together. It was the first time I had been brought into contact with a serious operation, and shudders went through me at the little I could see and hear. I was quite shocked at the cheerful voice of my husband, only understanding later the triumphant satisfaction of a successful fight for life. At last the patient was carried across the room to his bed and I went in to see him. He was only twenty; it was pitiable to think of a youth like that being maimed for life. The bed was without pillow or mattress, only a bamboo mat being between the patient and the bare planks. It seemed so hard and uncomfortable for a man who would have to lie there in pain for many days, but I recollected that no native was accustomed to any greater comfort. As soon as he began to recover consciousness, we left the Infirmary.

The same evening I accompanied my husband when he went to have a look at his patient after dinner. We found two women attending to him; one was his mother, who had again recovered her composure, the

other turned out to be his wife. Contrary to all declarations, he was married. His mother had denied it in order to prevent the wife consenting to the amputation of the leg.

The return to health and strength of this man was known and talked of with wonder all over the province. Not only had the Annamese known of few recoveries where the shark had been concerned, but they had never seen the amputation of a limb, and their astonishment knew no bounds.

The doctor's reputation was made.

A coolie bitten by a dangerous snake, who recovered after being inoculated with Calmette's serum, spread my husband's fame still farther, and never again did he lack native patients.

Their superstitions and love of independence, however, make the Annamese most aggravating in hospital. Time after time a native has gone off with his arm still in splints, or before the stitches have been taken out of a wound. The doctor is thus deprived of the satisfaction of seeing a perfect recovery. In the middle of the treatment, and often at the critical moment of the illness, patients disappear. Sometimes, after treating an interesting case with the greatest care, and visiting the patient a dozen times a day, he would go to the Infirmary to find an empty bed and all his investigations rendered incomplete.

One evening we were discussing how we might procure a wooden leg for the man whose leg had been amputated. My husband had given him some crutches that very day, and his manner of using them showed how strong and well he was. The leg would only cost

from fifty to sixty francs, and would be an inestimable boon to him for the rest of his life. The next morning we learned that our discussion of ways and means had been futile; the little present of crutches had enabled our friend to vanish, leaving no trace behind. We ought to have become accustomed to this finale, but this man of all others . . . and without a leg . . .

There are many natives, however, even among those who have disappeared so suddenly, who, though they have not seemed grateful at the time, have sometimes come back bringing a present of bananas or eggs. In some cases my husband has been presented with some little offering long after the patients have recovered their health. Once I saw a wrinkled old man come tottering in at the garden gate. His rags and his dishevelled grey hair betokened extreme poverty. He brought two eggs, which he placed with many "laïs" at my feet. My husband did not even recollect his case. On opening my boiled egg at breakfast the next morning, I was horrified to find a young chicken inside. I discovered it was one of those given to me by the old man: usually I distributed the fruit or eggs which were brought to me to our boys as soon as the donors' backs were turned. That does not mean we do not appreciate the gifts; on the contrary, they cheer us up in the midst of much work which is very disheartening. Even when neither words nor gifts convey any sense of gratitude, we have had proofs that the benefits received are not always forgotten.

An instance of this came in rather a startling manner. Just after we had gone to bed one night, I heard

dreadful screams, which seemed to be coming nearer and nearer, from the direction of the village. I wanted my husband to find out the meaning of the noise, but he was too sleepy to move. The shrieks at last became so frantic and piercing that I lay trembling all over. Suddenly I was convinced that they proceeded from some one in the garden, then from the house itself. My husband finally awoke, sprang out of bed and hurried on to the verandah. He ran straight into the arms of a lady who was staying with us that night, and who exclaimed: "Oh, there's an animal in my room." They went there together, but instead of an animal at bay, as she supposed, they found a poor woman lying flat on the ground half under the bed. She was bleeding profusely and still uttering intermittent screams and gasps; it was evident she had been very much injured. My husband was obliged to accompany her to the Infirmary, not a very pleasant task in the middle of the night, after a hard day's work. There he recognised her as a woman on whom he had once performed an operation. Though she had never said "Thank you" at the time, she immediately returned to the doctor when she was again in trouble.

The superstitions of the natives afford too many an unexpected and disconcerting surprise for the medical practitioner.

An Infirmary boy fell ill, and as he was a good servant my husband took much care and trouble, going to see him morning and evening for several days. The fever at last began to subside, and his recovery was only a matter of days. One evening

when I accompanied my husband, we were surprised to see a large number of people inside the little house. The room was in almost total darkness, the flickering light of two candles on an altar erected at the far end being the only illumination. We made our way through the natives to the corner where the boy habitually lay. For the first time he was sitting up on the plank bed, and appeared very excited. His cheeks were flushed, his eyes bright. He explained that a great sacrifice was taking place, and the bonze who officiated was a most famous man. As our eyes grew accustomed to the semi-darkness, we made out the altar with its little copper incense-burners, its vases filled with sand in which tapers were stuck, its blue jars of alcohol, and its offerings of fruit, flowers, roasted fowls, ducks, &c. &c. The bonze was an oldish man, with hair cut short, dressed in a long green silken robe. Every now and then he threw up his arms and gesticulated wildly, then he stood absolutely still, muttering prayers in a guttural tone. Suddenly he began making "laïs" before the altar, alternately prostrating himself and standing up, fervour in every movement. Finally, at a sign from him, he was handed a little jar of water; he raised it to his lips, filled his mouth, and then with much dignity he bent forward and—squirted it over all the fruit and roasts.

The movement in the room after this final rite (was it the priestly blessing?) proved to us that the ceremony was at an end. Complete silence had reigned hitherto, but now the awestruck audience began to talk in whispers and to change their positions. The

priest meanwhile removed his silk tunic and turban, and donned his ordinary brown garments. As he moved towards the door he said something in a low voice to the natives standing near. These immediately rushed up to the altar, and each seizing a dish followed him out. We saw the fruit, eggs, fowls, and ducks vanish, a little roast pig bringing up the rear. The stripping of the altar broke the last charm, and the boy turned to us, saying: "Me well now. Priest cure me." Then, in a confidential tone, "He eat all." This information upset me altogether. I recalled all my husband's attention and care, the medicine and food we had sent the lad, and I did not know whether to be angry or laugh. And this was a boy trained in the Infirmary too! My husband's philosophic, "That's all right then, you'll be back at work soon," checked the words on my lips, and we left the hut.

Incidents such as this have a comic side which saves the situation, but in research work the doctor and bacteriologist are without even that consolation. The escape of a patient is not so irritating as a temperature inaccurately taken, or the washing of microscopic films which preserve valuable specimens of blood. There is no compensation when you find that the dead animal, whose disease you have been studying for months, has been buried by a stable-boy before the post-mortem examination has been made, or when the troughs of two animals whose food must be kept entirely separate have been interchanged, or when your carefully bred mosquitoes have been allowed to escape. The Annamese makes a skilful and fearless

laboratory boy; catches and holds the animals adroitly while their temperature or a drop of blood is being taken, but child-like, does not understand the great importance of details, and discovers ingenious methods for getting through the routine work in the least possible time.

However, for the enthusiastic investigator, difficulties exist only to be overcome; he who works in the Tropics under more arduous conditions than in Europe must be ready to exercise more perseverance and patience. The greater the obstacles the greater the reward, when a new discovery can be announced or a new theory proved. To Pasteur this was the truest joy a human soul could experience.

Thus, notwithstanding the climate, the isolation, the want of sufficiently trained and French-speaking assistants, the work of this little Pasteur Institute continues. It is doing the noblest of all work, alleviating the sufferings of humanity, and it is to be hoped that in future, deaths from cholera, tuberculosis, cancer, and yellow fever will be as infrequent as are now those from diphtheria.

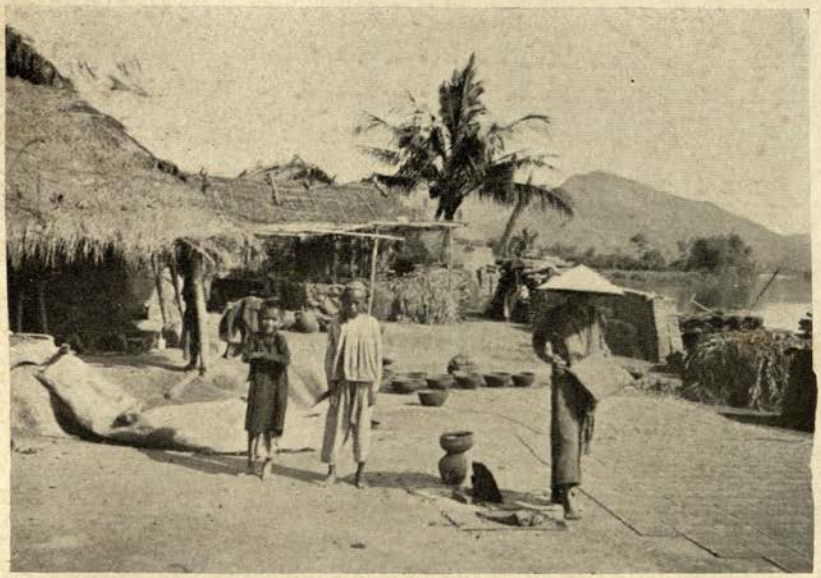
CHAPTER IV

IN AND ABOUT NHATRANG

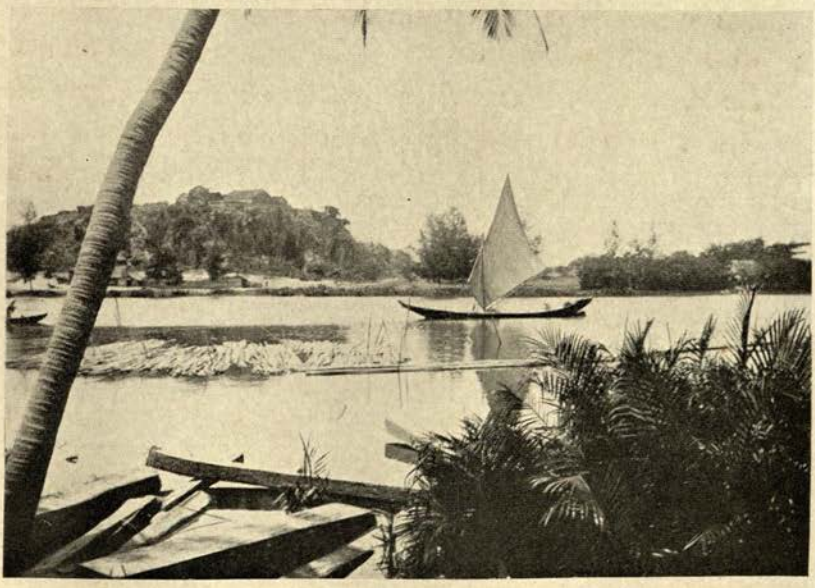
Lessons in riding and shooting : Configuration and outlook of Annam : Want of communications : Comparison with Cochin China : Beauty and attractiveness of the country : A native village : Pagodas and tombs : Water buffaloes : Red ants : A brickmaking village

As soon as I arrived in this country my husband began to give me lessons in riding and shooting, and it was not very long before I ceased to be terrified and to clutch on to my saddle at the slightest movement of the mare's ears or at the sound of my own gun. I rode astride, as my husband thought it was safer in this rough, roadless country. At first I had missed the games which I had enthusiastically played in England, but if I had continued to play them I should never have turned to these pursuits which alone have brought me into contact with the natives in the neighbourhood and enabled me to gain any knowledge of the country. Our continual excursions took us into many a remote corner.

Annam is very different from Cochin-China, where road, rail, and canal make communication easy. The latter colony has been occupied much longer, and its latent resources caused the first French settlers immediately to organise rapid means of transit. There



LOGOUN, THE BRICK-MAKING VILLAGE



THE RETURN OF THE FISHING-BOATS

are now good services of motor-cars, canal steamboats, and trains, as well as tram-lines round Saigon.

Annam has none of these advantages. The sea is its only convenient highway, and though there are safe harbours for shipping, yet there is so little commerce that it is all carried on by junk. But a junk is only practicable for those Europeans who have plenty of time, and at periods when monsoon and weather are favourable. On land there is the mandarin road, which follows the coast from north to south, but even in the best seasons it is impossible to drive over the whole length of it.

Forty miles to the north of Nhatrang, for instance, the road degenerates into a narrow path, which runs up a steep hill-side. It forms a natural staircase which you can neither ascend nor descend on horseback. Even native ponies led by the bridle, though they can climb like goats, risk a broken leg. This pass, known as the "Col du Deoka," is one of the wildest and most picturesque spots in Annam. During the troubles in 1908 its defence saved the province of Nhatrang from the rebels.

After the rainy season even the best parts of the road along the coast are impracticable, as numbers of the bridges are broken down or even entirely swept away by the floods. To reach a neighbouring village you must either ride or be carried in a palanquin.

At present the country is under survey for the Saigon-Hanoi Railway, but though the lines are laid and trains are running for some distance from either terminus, except for a section between Tourane and

Hué the embankments laid are scarcely begun in Central Annam.

It is natural, however, that little money should be spent on the communications of a country which is poor and which can barely feed its own population. The flat strip of land between mountains and sea is fertile, but with a few exceptions so narrow that it will only just support the coast villages. The population, however, has few needs and is content with little; famine such as is sometimes experienced by richer countries is unknown.

Besides rice the Annamese grow a little maize, tobacco, sweet potatoes, and the castor-oil plant, but cultivate nothing in sufficient quantities for serious exportation.

If, however, Annam is not rich, it is extremely picturesque; the prettiest spots in Indo-China are to be found there. Her jagged coast-line, her rough uneven surface, her wild virgin forests, are the most striking features; and not only is the scenery very varied, but there are many regions still untrodden by the foot of the white man. No country could be more interesting to explore, and for our part we determined to make as many excursions as my husband's work would allow.

On our evening rides we used to visit the surrounding villages and pagodas, but on Sunday we took our guns and went farther afield.

The Annamese village straggles over a large surface; there is no plan or order, the favourite position for huts being round the market. It presents an appearance very different from that of the Tonking village,

which is compact and surrounded by a thick high bamboo hedge. These hedges, which are veritable fortress walls, were originally planted to protect the village from the raids of pirate bands which at one time were a scourge to all the northern part of Indo-China. As one travels from Haiphong to Hanoi, right through the Tonkinese delta, these villages dotted here and there alone break the monotony of the rice-fields, which extend as far as the eye can reach. There is not a single isolated hut on this immense bright green plain; the only buildings to be seen are the pagodas, which have been erected wherever the rare promontories cannot be levelled for the cultivation of rice. No huts or dwellings are visible, for the inhabitants still cling to their thick hedges, though no hostile tribes are now to be feared. This gives the villages an air of mystery which those of Annam do not possess.

Though the Annamese village is not surrounded by hedges, yet it may be recognised from a distance by its mass of green trees, bamboos male and female, cocoa-palms sixty to eighty feet high crowned by a tuft of waving feathery leaves, and thick-foliaged mango-trees. The fruit of this last is generally preferred to any other in the Tropics. Areca-palms (*Areca catechu*) are also never absent near any native dwelling. They resemble the cocoa-palm, but the trunks, instead of being gracefully curved, are as straight as a wand. The areca-nuts grow like the cocoa-nuts, just below the crown of leaves at the top. They are chopped up and chewed with the betel leaf. For this reason the areca-palm is always in request, and is said to be

worth a dollar a year to its owner. We Europeans eat the soft stem from which the leaves spring; very finely sliced it makes a delicious salad.

It is only when you are in the midst of these plantations that you perceive the little native dwellings scattered here and there, looking all the more diminutive by comparison with the high, luxuriant vegetation. We often disturbed the inmates by our sudden appearance; little naked brown children sitting in the shade of the trees would in their fright throw away the pieces of sugar-cane they were intently sucking and begin to cry. The women, who were mutually assisting one another in the removal of the vermin in their long black hair, would look up a minute and then continue their task. Unlike the pious Hindoo, who places each insect in safety on the ground, the Annamese kills it between his teeth. There were often several couples thus engaged, or perhaps three or four women squatting one behind the other all rendering the same service.

Nearly every dwelling possessed a little garden of marketable produce, a patch of maize, tobacco, or sugar-cane, a few rows of sweet potatoes, some enormous-leaved caladiums, the tubers of which are food for swine, cucumbers and pumpkins, and here and there a tuft of manioc (tapioca plant) with its palm-shaped leaves. Along the barricade are planted fruit trees, shaddocks (*Citrus decumana*), whose fruit resembles a magnified green orange, banana-trees and jaks, whose fruit is as big as a man's head. A few flowering plants are generally cultivated also. The owner tends them carefully and trains them

symmetrically; a bougainvillea is often trained in the form of a dragon or cock.

Every habitation, including the village school and communal house, has the same bamboo walls and thatched roof; a rich proprietor, however, often lives in a house of brick, though such a luxury is rare in small hamlets. Brick and stone are reserved almost entirely for the pagodas and tombs. The Annamese are content with some low hovel for themselves, but for their dead and their altars they prefer something better. While their own dwellings, too, are grouped round some mosquito-infected pond, the pagodas and tombs occupy the best sites in the neighbourhood. Every hill round Nhatrang has its temple on the topmost summit, from which a beautiful view may be obtained. In districts where there are obviously no suitable spots above the ordinary level, these temples are situated in such a manner that the background is in harmony with the general plan of the edifice and are thus shown off to the best advantage. The tombs are scattered about in carefully chosen sites, and are generally shaded by some beautiful tree. The most common form of the tomb in South Annam is that of the tortoise, one of the sacred animals of the Annamese. Others represent the bud of the lotus flower either upright or lying down, but both are probably derived from the emblematic stone of Brahmanism.

We often dismounted from our horses and climbed the little hills round Nhatrang for the sake of the view from the different pagodas. As soon as we passed through the stone wall or bamboo railing with which the temple was surrounded, the bonze and

guardians would come running out of their shelters close by. Though they would smile and bow, they kept their eyes fixed on us the whole time, and perhaps did not like the intrusion. Not that there was anything of value in these poor little temples: the ritual emblems of red painted wood, some earthen and porcelain vases on the cement altar for burning tapers, and a few bronze bells and gongs usually formed their entire wealth. Occasionally we discovered a big bell finely carved, valuable on account of its age, but that is not an article you can carry away in your pocket. Even when hanging from a beam, it does not sway an inch under the heavy strokes dealt upon it by the bonze with a wooden-headed hammer.

The caricatures of Buddha and the sacred animals, both sculptured and painted, were of great interest to us. The stone slab in front of the chief door was always a work of art in itself. Every temple has this kind of screen a yard or two from its entrance, so that you cannot look into the edifice from a distance.

One day we came upon a pagoda in a most curious place. We were snipe-shooting round some pools quite close to the river about three kilometres inland, when, passing at the foot of some huge boulders of granite, I noticed a recently made well. There was no village in the neighbourhood. Who had dug it? I was still more surprised on moving forward to see a little patch of maize. Suddenly a bonze appeared, squeezing himself between two enormous boulders, and after many smiles and remarks, none of which I understood, made signs for me to follow him. I called to my husband, and we in our turn squeezed ourselves

through the opening by which the bonze had again disappeared. On the other side was a little path which mounted upwards right between the rocks. It was like a tunnel, and cut into steep uneven steps. At first we followed our guide without difficulty. Light filtered through interstices here and there, but it was impossible to guess from the outside that there was any hollow place for a passage. After mounting about a hundred metres, twisting and turning, crawling under one rock, scrambling over another, we suddenly found ourselves in a little open space directly under a huge rock which is a landmark for a long distance round. This grotto had been furnished as a pagoda. Altar, tapers, bell, all was complete—there were even two little nooks on either side arranged as sleeping apartments for the guardians and our guide. We entered one of these, a wee hole containing a mat, an earthen drinking vessel, and a saucepan of rice, but the other required a gymnastic performance of which I did not feel capable.

I then wanted, for the sake of the view, to climb on to the top of the rock which formed our ceiling, but the bonze shook his head; either it was really impossible or there were other secrets which he did not wish to divulge. By craning our necks and contorting ourselves we had little glimpses up and down the river from the interior of the room, and we had to be content with that.

The bonze reaccompanied us down his curious staircase; he was evidently delighted with all our exclamations of surprise at his ingenuity. He was like a child with a new toy, and we were

again struck with the simple disposition of the Annamese.

One of our favourite evening rides was to a place near here where it was possible for the water buffaloes to ford the shallow river. At sunset different herds might always be seen as they were driven across on their way home. The huge size of these animals, their enormous horns, which sometimes measure one and a half metres from tip to tip, and above all their defiant attitude, strike one with terror. In Annam they are specially dangerous to Europeans. I have often felt paralysed when I have come upon two or three suddenly; they look so monstrous and savage that it seems futile to run away. Probably they are frightened, too, at the sudden encounter, but they never show it. They always move forward or back simultaneously, ready to stand together for defence or attack. If you stand still, they will snuff the air and come a step nearer, or a male being among them, he will lead the way and the others will follow close behind. By the time, however, they are upon you, a call for help summons their guardian, a little naked brat of eight or nine, who has sprung out of space, and with a whack of his little bamboo cane has sent them flying to join the rest of the herd. The management of these beasts by such children is wonderful. They hold them in submission with their shrill little voice and bit of stick. Familiarity breeds contempt, they have lived with these animals since the time when, at the age of three or four, they have been put in charge of the little herdsman, a brother or friend not much older than themselves.

From the shade of some trees they have seen their herd graze till the sun grew hot, watched them then lumber one by one into some miry pool and roll themselves in it till covered with a thick coating of mud. When once the animals have settled themselves in the deepest part, they lie stock-still, blinking their blue eyes under their long straight lashes, and giving little snorts and sighs of satisfaction. There is henceforth no fear that they will stray, and the children have only to sleep, eat, play, sleep again, or lie on their backs gazing at the green branches above their heads the livelong day. Sometimes the animals penetrate so deeply into the mud that a passer-by does not notice them till he suddenly hears noises like pistol-shots, as each heavy mass heaves itself out of its mud bed.

As it gets cool about five o'clock, animals and herdsmen bestir themselves. The great event of the day has arrived. The herd is collected and driven towards the river. But the animals take their pleasure more soberly than the children. They walk with slow steps into the water till they are almost out of their depth, and then stand with just their snorting noses and long horns above the surface. An inexperienced eye would say that a crocodile or some strange serpent was protruding out of the water. The children meanwhile dance about on the bank; if any one is the proud possessor of a garment, it is put aside while they run in and out of the shallow water, chasing and splashing each other. When it is time for the herd to cross they swim out to the nearest buffaloes, mount their backs by means of their tails, and from this exalted position drive all on to the farther bank. If the water

is deep, the buffaloes must swim, but the children are all the better pleased, and stand erect in triumph. Sometimes the animals refuse to leave the water; the piercing cries of the minute driver and the brandishing of his cane are of no avail. He then guides his steed to the back of the herd, and passing from one to another sets them in motion with a deft stroke here and there.

We were so fascinated by this scene that it was often late when we turned our horses' heads homewards. But the darkness gave us another delightful and entirely novel spectacle. The road from Cho-Moi to Nhatrang was lined on either side with thick bamboos, which grew half in the water of the rice-fields, half on the embankments of the road. Occasionally these bamboos were one mass of fireflies, which in their millions outlined exactly the form of each tree. We were even able to recognise any other kind of bush or tree which grew among the bamboos. If only the lights had been bigger and more constant it would have been like an avenue of Christmas trees. The flashes were, however, intermittent, but the fire of all the flies on one and the same tree shot into flame simultaneously. Tree followed tree in quick succession and it was almost as though they were signalling to one another. There were about sixty flashes a minute. It was a most wonderful sight. I do not know if scientists have explained this extraordinary and instantaneous obedience of so many millions of flies to a common impulse.

The picture of these fireflies recalls to my mind the croaking of frogs. As soon as darkness falls, the

rice-fields seem alive with them; their monotonous chantings never cease or pause. When we had passed along this road in the sunlight two hours earlier, the rice-fields, like the bamboos, wore their ordinary appearance; there was no hint of the intense life hidden beneath the still leaves and silent water. Now by the evidence of sight and sound we are taken into two realms of teeming life undreamt of a short time before.

On Sundays, however, with our guns to the fore, we were glad of this intense tropical life. We never went out at dawn without coming across some game worth having—peacocks, jungle-fowl and cocks, snipe, quail, barking deer, hares, and pheasants of various kinds, and other birds. There were, too, many beasts which we did not see (nor did we want to), though they probably often saw us. The shock of hearing a tiger or panther scuttle out of a bush, or of stepping suddenly upon the quite recent traces of a wild elephant, was emotion enough, especially when we reflected that only shot for snipe was in our guns. The hunter hunted is not so rare in this wild country.

Less than five years ago the bursar of the Residence at Nhatrang left the village one afternoon to meet a friend. He was warned to be back by sunset or to remain near some village, for the tigers were at that time even more dangerous than at present. Twenty kilometres from Nhatrang, on the mandarin road, while riding round a dark corner overshadowed by trees, a tiger and tigress sprang upon him. Either he lost his head, or his arm was knocked up, for he shot

his revolver into the air. As soon as his boy, who was riding behind him, saw him dragged from his horse, he turned round and galloped back to Nhatrang nearly mad with fright. A party immediately set out, but by the time they arrived on the spot the poor young fellow was dead and half eaten.

There is hardly a man who has lived long in this part of the country who has not seen the tiger. The stories of this animal's habits, his misdeeds, his encounters, are continually on the lips of the Europeans. Many of them are as thrilling as the superstitious narratives of the natives are ludicrous.

There are other inconvenient encounters during shooting expeditions, which, if less dangerous, are by no means agreeable. One day on our way up the river to see the brick-making industry at Logoum, I got out of the boat to shoot a cock on some rocky ground above the bank. I clambered up, hiding behind one boulder and then another, till within twenty yards or so, when I stood still to take good aim. But the shot was never fired. As I raised my gun to my shoulder I was stung on the eyelid, and before I could brush the insect away I felt myself being fiercely bitten all over. Instinctively I threw my gun away and tore off my clothes without a second's hesitation. Underneath my dress I was literally red with enormous red ants, which were doubling themselves up in order to penetrate into my skin more deeply. It was real agony. Happily my bathing-dress was in the sampan, and I got into that while we cleared my garments

from these terrible insects. My husband happened to have a bottle of menthol in his pocket, which so greatly diminished the pain of my bites that we were able to resume our journey.

Our sampan was that day in charge of a man and his wife who evidently took as much interest in us as we in them. For the tiniest bird that caught their eye they would stop the boat, being anxious to see me shoot something. But soon the wind dropped, and they could sit idle no longer. Directly the matted cocoa-palm sail began to flap in and out both seized it and with great dexterity rolled it up. Then the woman, going to the bow, took the right-hand oar, and having loosened the rope with which it was attached to a raised peg (this peg takes the place of the rowlock on our rowing-boats), in order to be able to swing it more freely, she placed her two feet on the left edge of the sampan and began to row. The edge of these sampans is by no means broad—about an inch—but with her bare feet she took a firm grip, and in spite of the heavy oar swayed backwards and forwards with well-balanced movements. Her slight but vigorous young figure was distinctly visible every now and then as her long tunic first clung round her and then floated out on the breeze. Her husband rowed at the stern, keeping time with her, one of his feet thrust out behind him to steer the heavy rudder. Two of their children were also in the boat; the elder one from time to time placed himself beside his mother, his little palms on the thick oar. He did not help the work in the least, but at any rate he was accustoming

himself to a movement by which he would later earn his living.

Between times he came and stirred a saucepan of rice which was boiling at the bottom of the boat. I had noticed steam and smoke coming from between the planks on which we lay, and had feared for a minute that the sampan was on fire. But, no: the child raised a board, and we perceived the family meal being cooked. It is astonishing how the Annamese, with their continual fires in hut and boat, manage to avoid a conflagration. They seldom extinguish a fire, and though from neglect it sometimes goes out, there generally remain enough smouldering ashes to enable the householder to light his pipe or the wife to fan up a flame at a moment's notice. The smoke from the present fire in the sampan came in our eyes, and was most disagreeable, but as our destination was at hand we had not the heart to make them put it out and thus spoil their meal.

We were soon alongside the group of high cocoa- and areca-palms, which was all we could see of Logoun. Clouds of smoke issued from the tree-tops. This little village makes all the bricks for the province. The river constitutes its only highway; there is no road leading to it, but the inhabitants seem to like their isolated position.

As we stepped ashore, a number of dogs came rushing towards us barking furiously. If it had not been for one of the children who had followed us from the sampan, we should certainly have been bitten. Just as the European's dog flies at a native who tries to enter his garden, so the native's dog flies at the

European, though the beasts are often of identical breed and family.

The barking and noise brought the inhabitants to their doors. They neither looked surprised to see us nor curious as to the reason of our visit, but all the children collected together and followed us at a safe distance. Wending our way between the huts, we came to an open space where three young Annamese girls were mixing the clay with their feet. For such a purpose feet are certainly more convenient than hands, but Europeans would never have managed to raise and twist the sticky earth so easily and deftly without any loss of balance. When the clay had been brought to the right texture, they cut it into bricks and tiles with a piece of string, and put these out in the sun to dry, pushing them into place with their feet. They were left there till the mud oven was ready to bake them. The most interesting process is that of the lathe, which was just then being worked by the oldest woman I have ever seen. Her hair was completely white, her eyes dim, her teeth gone long since, her face one mass of deep furrows, but in spite of this, neither wrinkled hands nor feet had lost their cunning. With a sharp movement she set the turning-board in motion, and her hands moulded one pot after another; she produced quite a number while we stood there. They were taken into the sun by children who stood round her, and whenever she mumbled something, they all crowded round and listened attentively. She seemed to be treated with the greatest reverence and devotion. She deserved it, for she had handled that lathe for

years and years, enriching the village by her toil. All the pots were of the same shape, but of different sizes, and when baked were of a dirty red-brown colour.

While the women worked thus, the men were engaged in digging clay from the banks of the river and cutting timber for heating the ovens. The logs of wood were placed all round the village and formed a veritable barricade. From time to time the bricks and pots are taken to neighbouring markets to be sold, or sent to the Residence instead of taxes. It was surprising that with such a flourishing industry not one of the inhabitants of this village had thought of building himself a home of brick; all lived in the ordinary bamboo hut.

On our way to the boat I tried to buy two pretty little shrubs which I noticed in a garden near the water's edge. I addressed a man standing near them, who seemed to be the owner. As we began to discuss the price, there appeared an old woman, who unceremoniously brushed the man aside and took up the argument. I saw at once that I had to deal with a more formidable adversary, and sure enough a sum nearly twice that originally asked was gradually extracted from me. This incident is very typical of the influence of the older woman in the house, whether she be mother or mother-in-law of the real master. Though unable to read or write, it is she who is the most capable in business matters, and who manages all money affairs. Men recognise this quality in their womenkind and give it free play.

When we regained our sampan, the little family

were just finishing their meal. There was such a variety of dishes that we wondered how they had been able to prepare them all at the bottom of a boat. I only became aware of the ingenuity of the Annamese cook much later, when, on just such a sampan, he had turned out meals of five courses three days running. His difficulties were even greater on that occasion, for there were more occupants in the boat, and his every movement was hampered by the legs of the rowers all round him.

This incident happened during an excursion we made higher up this same river, where it wound through a virgin forest. The journey was not wanting in distraction, for every few hundred yards we had to mount rapids. The rowers would suddenly fling themselves out of the boat, and some towing a rope, others pushing, pulling, and dragging the sampan itself, they would succeed in getting us into smooth water and safety. They gave vent to yell after yell during these exciting moments—even when they slipped and floundered over the stones and took an involuntary header they never ceased. If they had made more use of their muscles and less of their lungs, we should have got along more quickly, but they seemed to think noise essential to the boat's movements.

I wondered, as each rapid came into view, what would happen if the boats were broken up. There were no paths through the jungle that surrounded us, except those made by wild elephants. Where herds had passed, the grass had been trampled down, branches of trees broken off and small trees uprooted

altogether and thrown on one side. Numbers of heavy hoofs had sometimes flattened the surface so effectually that it would have been possible to drive a pony-cart in their wake. It was an awe-inspiring sight. In any case these curiously made paths would not have led us to a village, for we were beyond the range of the Annamese, who always cling to the coast, and the Moi villages were few and far between. So inextricable was the undergrowth that the eye could not pierce beyond the water's edge, and even above our heads the branches from the trees on either side were so thickly interwoven that occasionally they almost shut out the sky.

Fortunately we arrived at our destination, a Moi hamlet, safely, and our downward course was made in something like three hours instead of three days. The most expert native of our crew posted himself in the stern of the boat, and with a long pole steered us dexterously down the rapids. His quickness of eye and hand were amazing; he pushed off a rock to the right, then off one to the left, in swift succession, and conducted us into calm water each time without accident. We had many an exciting moment as we dashed along with the rushing water between the huge boulders.

In fact we have met with many adventures on this river, but the most common was that of finding ourselves stranded, the tide having gone down too quickly. On these occasions we have had to wait till rescue came in the shape of a very small sampan. We could thus be pushed along the deeper channels by the natives, who waded knee-deep in the water. The

sampans into which we were transferred were often not much bigger than a clothes-basket, and the slightest movement overturned them. Thus have we often arrived at the crowded market-place—safe, if without dignity.

CHAPTER V

DAILY ROUTINE IN THE LITTLE CAI-NHA *

The awakening at dawn : The rush into light and air of the *cai-nha's* occupants : Tidying up and arranging the house for the day : The *ba-gia :* The baby's meal : Occupations of the children : The market : The rice-fields—irrigating, ploughing, sowing, and planting out : Occupations which bring men and women together : Evening leisure

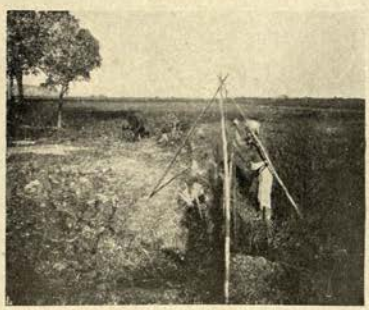
ALMOST simultaneously with the rising of the sun, there is a stir in the sleeping Annamese village. No sooner have the first horizontal rays of dawn struck a small hut than the bamboo door is pushed outwards, supported on two sticks, and a man emerges, stooping down to avoid the low rafter. He rubs his eyes, pushes his fingers through his hair to drag it back from his forehead, and re-twists his chignon. His toilet is then apparently complete. As he stands at the door, the dog, the pig, the fowls, those with chickens clucking loudly to their little ones to follow, all scuttle quickly between his legs, glad to be out in the light and air again. Then come the children, scarcely yet awake, stumbling through the narrow opening, the elder ones each carrying a younger one on the hip. When they catch sight of us sitting on the beach

* *Cai-nha* equals " the house," but also means " home."

OUR BEST ROAD IN NOVEMBER

ON THEIR WAY TO MARKET. THE BASKETS ARE CARRIED LIKE A PAIR OF SCALES

PLOUGHING UNDER WATER



PRIMITIVE METHOD OF IRRIGATION

waiting for a sampan to cross the river, there is a series of little screams, and all disappear again in or behind the hut, tumbling over one another in their hurry to escape. I never can make out how a child carrying another nearly as big as himself can scurry away so quickly. After a moment, finding we remain still, they venture into sight again, and if we take the trouble to talk and to encourage them, they will soon become quite friendly, They run in and out of the water, diving, swimming, rolling each other over in the sand, and if we laugh at one of their antics they will join in boisterously, repeating the joke again and again.

Clothes, except for an occasional little cotton coat, which comes down to the waist, are regarded as superfluous in a fishing village, both for boys and girls, till about the age of ten. The coat is to protect them from the hot rays of the sun. For all ornament they have round their necks a piece of string, to which is hung a little black cotton pocket about an inch square, containing a charm against disease or some other misfortune. The charm consists of a paper on which signs are made by a bonze, who uses the blood of some bird or animal instead of ink. Many of the children also wear a copper or silver ring round ankle and wrist.

After the children an old woman (*ba-gia*) appears, industriously sweeping all round the home. The Annamese never think of brushing out the corners or thoroughly cleaning their one-roomed hut, but they make it an absolute rule to clear away all twigs, dried fruit-skins, &c. &c., for a yard or two around it. This

neat smooth surface in front of every native dwelling strikes the eye; it is swept at least twice a day, and when I peer through the semi-darkness at the dust and dirt inside, I find the custom rather amusing.

While the *ba-gia* is thus occupied, two younger women, the wife and sister of the fisherman, are busy rolling up the mats on which the family have slept. They cover the camp bed—a trellis-work of bamboo raised a foot from the ground on four legs—with bowls and pots. Why should not that which serves as a bed at night make an excellent shop during the day? Native lentils, haricots, bunches of bananas, are spread out; a jar of white lime and a flat basket containing betel leaves neatly arranged in a circle, are placed conspicuously for the betel chewers; tablets of cut tobacco, a packet of matches, and some cigarette papers await the smokers. Finally, a touch of colour is given to the stall by a few yards of differently dyed cottons, some packets of squibs, or else some tapers wrapped up in red paper. The two women regard their stock with pride, and when all is in place whisper a few words to the *ba-gia* about the sale of the goods, for they themselves are going to market. When all else is ready, the mother calls for her youngest born, in order to give it a last meal before starting off. A baby of about ten months is immediately brought to her by a youngster of eight or nine. She holds it to her breast with her right arm, while with the left she gives some last touches to the stall. Then finally, after sniffing and smelling the infant all over its little body, for the Annamese never kiss their children in any other manner, she entrusts it to the charge of the *ba-gia*.

The younger women till now have been wearing the usual wide indigo blue cotton trousers, their breasts being simply covered with a diamond-shaped piece of cotton. This scanty garment, which is only worn in the house, is fastened tightly round the neck at the top and round the waist at the bottom with strings, leaving the arms and back bare. Now, however, they don their long blue tunics and put on their latania-leaf hats. The bow-like bamboos are taken from a corner and given a last polish with a tab of their tunics. The women are very proud of these rods, on which they carry their baskets hanging like scales to a beam, and those with metal ends are sometimes bequeathed as heirlooms. Dried fish is the commodity to be carried this morning. The smell of it pervades indeed the whole village, but we have an extra whiff as the two women with their light and springy gait move past us and the baskets are swung under our noses.

On our return from a day's shooting expedition, we again peeped into the hut. The younger women were still absent, but the *ba-gia* was there squatting peacefully on the camp bed, her feet on the extreme edge, her chin almost touching her knees. A customer had just come up. He took one of the green round betel leaves, laid it in the palm of his hand, and with the stick, placed inside the jar of lime for the purpose, pasted the white gluey substance over the leaf, rolled it up, and stuck it in his mouth. Not a word was spoken, but I observed the keen glance of the old woman as he deposited two sapeks on the edge of the bed, before continuing his way. As we talked to her, at cross-purposes as usual, the youngest child began to

cry and was brought to her. His grandmother, stretching out her legs among the pots and bowls, took the baby and laid it flat on its back across her knees. Then she drew near her a bowl of cooked rice and with the aid of chopsticks raised a little to her mouth. After chewing and masticating it well she spat it mouthful by mouthful between the baby's lips. This is the common method of feeding a young child, and in cases where the mother must absent herself from home it is begun within a week of its birth. That a mother should feed her child thus is bad enough, but the custom seems even more deplorable when carried out by a dirty old woman, whose lips and broken teeth are discoloured with betel chewing.

The fisherman sat in company with several others, mending his net. When our horses and guns arrived in another sampan, and the children, who were still playing on the sand, discovered that we had shot a peacock, there was great excitement. They clustered round, shouting with glee, and when I held out the bird so that one of them might carry it to the house, a number of hands clutched it eagerly. There was a battle royal, in which feathers flew in all directions, but at last a little youngster, not much bigger than the peacock, secured the prize and bore it in triumph homeward. He was followed by a band of small friends, but the little girls drew back as soon as the end of the village was reached. The boys, however, followed as far as the gate, and when he rejoined them with ten cents it was very apparent that he was the hero of the hour.

Children lead a very happy and joyous life during

their first years. Crying is very rarely heard, except in cases of illness, and the peevish whimper of the European child is unknown. Parents are very devoted to their children, but they generally have such large families that spoiling is impossible. The Annamese are very prolific; if there was less infant mortality the race would increase a great deal faster than at present.

The love and care of the mother are not proof against her terrible ignorance, the most elementary rules of hygiene being unknown. In difficult confinements, the *ba-gia* who acts as midwife resorts to superstitious ceremonies. The Annamese doctor is forbidden to see his patient, and if consulted must give his advice through the closed door. In these circumstances one may conjecture how utterly against all principles it is to call in a European doctor. My husband has, however, occasionally penetrated to such cases, and has been horrified at the spectacle. As a rule the woman has lain in agony three or four days, and it is quite impossible to relate all the *ba-gia* has done to bring the baby into the world. During the whole of her suffering a charcoal fire has been kept alight under the bed, the door of the hut has scarcely been opened, and the patient has been covered with all the rugs and tunics her friends could lay their hands on.

The ignorance shown in the treatment of children during the first year, the critical period in all climates, is not less than that displayed during a confinement. Babies are suffered to be bitten by mosquitoes, their little bodies are not washed, nor even their eyes, so that they are often partially blinded from this neglect. Scabs on the head are considered a healthy sign, and many

are the superstitious treatments to which the babies must submit. Their childhood is happy all the same, because of their freedom. If their parents are able to send them to school they consider themselves extremely fortunate. Never is a child more proud than when he walks along the road with a dirty copy-book tucked under his arm. It is only at the age of twelve or thirteen that he joins his elders in the toils of every-day life.

The little boys about that time accompany their fathers fishing, work on the rice-fields, fetch firewood from the forest, or look after the buffaloes. The little girls go to market or help on the rice-fields, or are occupied at home. Every morning and evening one sees them running to and fro with a rapid light step to the nearest well to fetch water. From the bamboos over their shoulders are hung large jars instead of baskets, and, when full, these heavy vessels press the rods into their flesh and bend them down with their weight. They seem to like the task, however, for at the well they meet their young companions and do not always hurry home again. Chattering and laughter may always be heard round the wells during the last hour before sunset. To pull up the water the girls have little square baskets made from a banana-leaf, which they let down with a thin cord into the well. The first water, however, that they draw up is not destined for their jars; they drink, then raise the basket in their upstretched arms and pour the rest over themselves, clothes and all. They repeat this two or three times, and only when their garments are clinging to their slight little forms and they feel cool and re-

THE NATIVE MARKET

THE MARKET FLOODED

freshed, do they fill their jars. A few more laughing remarks, and they shoulder their burdens and trot off again.

Going to market is certainly the favourite occupation of the Annamese girl and woman. She likes the independence of the day spent in the company of her acquaintances and friends from other villages, and above all she rejoices in the opportunity of exercising the cunning and smartness over a bargain, of which she is a past mistress. In the smallest transaction she concentrates all her energies to make every sapek she can, and if she is able to introduce a rotten mango among the good ones that she is selling to a cook, or persuade her friend to give her another handful of rice for nothing, she absolutely glories in her astuteness and business capacity. She will always ask twenty cents for a cocoa-nut when she is willing to take five, and it is only when the would-be customer is in the act of leaving the market or of seeking elsewhere, that she will lower her price.

Not that I often go to the market. The spectacle of all these women sitting on the ground with their goods spread on the bare earth does not induce appetite, nor is the smell of the dried fish, *nuoc-mam* * and *choum-choum*† mixed up with that of fruit and vegetables, agreeable. The noise, too, is appalling. None of the women stop talking for a single minute, and to be heard above the conversation going on close to them they have to employ the full force of their lungs. The voice of an Annamese woman is never musical, so that

* Condiment, made of fermented fish-water.
† Rice alcohol.

shrill accents and high notes are the rule, and a discussion with an angry woman is more to be avoided here even than elsewhere. Their menfolk are fully aware of this fact and are careful never to raise a storm unnecessarily, or if they accidentally do so, they absent themselves from the homestead until it has spent itself.

At the market the only masculine forms to be seen are those of the Europeans' cooks who are catering for their next meal. Except for these men and an occasional child whom a mother has been unable to leave behind, the market is entirely given up to women. A mother carries her child in one of her baskets, where it makes weight against a sucking pig or a few kilogrammes of rice.

Nhatrang has lately been able to boast of a covered market with a cement floor, but as the sellers have to pay one or two sapeks to establish themselves and baskets there, many prefer to remain on the dusty or muddy ground outside. In November, in the midst of the rainy season, nearly all use the building, for a lake sometimes two feet in depth covers the space around it. Yet there are always a few women who persist in establishing themselves along the edge of the water as near their usual position as possible.

It is a most curious scene. Some of the women have almost had to swim to get to Nhatrang, others have to come by boat, lifting their light craft over the places where the road was not submerged. The bad weather never seems to deter anybody from coming, in fact at such times the market is often more crowded than ever. The women probably enjoy the novelty

and excitement as children would, and keeping their goods dry appears to be their only preoccupation. They roll up their trousers to their hips, draw the lappets of their tunics over their shoulders, and wade through the water courageously.

Certainly it can be no great pleasure for them to stay at home, for in some of the villages, at the rainy season, the huts are all flooded. Their owners remain in possession, however, as long as possible; after dragging everything on to the camp bed they all cuddle there themselves, or if the water rises still higher they erect another edifice on the top of the bed and climb up another story. We have often ridden out to one of these flooded villages, and when I have heard voices and laughter coming from under some thatched roof under which a high stream is flowing, I have not been able to believe my ears. That inmates should still remain there when only a foot or two separates the roof from the level of the water passes my comprehension. At any moment the whole dwelling may be carried away. Sometimes they have lighted a fire and then from lack of space they risk being burnt as well as drowned. None seem distressed at their situation, they look at and talk of the rising water with as much interest as we who have a watertight roof to return to.

Two markets are held at Nhatrang every day, one in the morning and one in the evening, but the hours are elastic and no sooner has the last comer arrived than the first is taking her departure. The women go off as heavily laden as they came, for if they have sold their goods they have bought others. Their prepara-

tions for the long trudge home are soon made. Rising from their squatting position, the dust is shaken from their long-suffering tunics, the corners of which again serve to give a last polish to the treasured bamboos. Then the rods are lifted several times to see if the baskets are of equal weight, the pointed mushroom hats are secured firmly on their heads by pushing the red bands which hold them well under the chin, and all is ready. They move off singly or in groups. If several women start together they always walk one behind the other, never two abreast. As they always keep within an equal distance, they can still talk, and the one right in front will carry on a running conversation with the last of the line without ever turning her head or slackening her pace. As their gait is more of a run than a walk, their heels never touching the ground, one would think they had sufficient exertion without wasting their breath in conversation.

It is amusing to watch a woman who makes the purchase of a pig. She cannot carry it home alone and is obliged to ask assistance from one of her friends. The two have hard work to place the struggling animal in the bamboo lattice-work basket which is the usual means of transport for pigs. Notwithstanding its struggles and efforts to get away, it is at last introduced into its narrow cage and the opening made fast with a piece of bamboo string. The poor animal pokes its paws through the holes of the basket, and is powerless to make a movement. It is not powerless to squeal, however, and makes the most of its only remaining resource. The noise is deafening, but the women continue their conversation calmly above the

squeals of their charge, and soon he is safely slung to a pole which they place between them over their shoulders. If the Annamese only adopted the same method with their ducks, they would save themselves much time and trouble.

In South Annam it is not rare to meet a herd of ducks. The first time we saw any number driven together was one evening by moonlight. We were preparing for bed in a *tram** where we had to pass the night, when we heard the soft patter of waddling feet on the dusty road, accompanied by such a quacking as might announce the assemblage of all the ducks of the universe. We went out, and there beheld perhaps a thousand or more ducks being driven in serried ranks by three or four natives. The latter held long canes, and while one directed the foremost duck, the others kept its followers in place. The outlines of the herd were even, its form symmetrical. Suddenly the leading duck was led off the road into an open space near us; the army followed suit, and to our disgust we found that they, too, were going to spend the night at the *tram*. However, they were too tired with their march to quack long, and when they fell asleep, we were allowed to do likewise.

We made inquiries as to how the Annamese came to possess so many ducks at once, for it was impossible that they had been hatched out in the ordinary way. It appears that the eggs are incubated by being laid in flat round baskets and covered with warm paddy, which is frequently changed. It is a business which

* *Tram*=post of relay, where the mail changes hands; postal officials and mandarin travellers can find shelter here.

needs close attention and an accurate sense of temperature by touch, for no thermometer is used. Very few natives can manage it successfully, and the whole industry seems limited to certain villages.

When the ducks are old enough, they are distributed over the country. They must be driven very slowly and carefully and only in the early morning or late evening. During the hot part of the day they are led into water, and it is curious to see a pond or a corner of a rice-field literally moving with ducks. They are brown-black (earth colour), so that one is struck by the bobbing and flapping before being able to distinguish what they really are.

Besides the market, work on the rice-field has its charm for the young girls and women, but this only occupies them for short periods and at stated times. In Annam it is the men who are chiefly employed. If the natural irrigation has been insufficient, it is they who bale the water over the banks which separate one field from another. These dikes are constructed as much as possible at right angles with the stream, and the openings are so arranged that the water is distributed evenly over the rice-fields, but a slight accident may leave one dry, and then the natives must repair the mistake. For this purpose three stakes are planted on the dike of the unwatered field. These support a cord, to which is attached a basket or a bale with a long handle made of plaited bamboo. The instruments are primitive. To work the basket, strings are attached to either side, and the weight resting on the stakes, two men by a twist of their wrists transfer the water comparatively easily from a lower to a higher level.

Only one man is necessary if the bale is used; by means of its long handle he swings the water upwards without any exertion. But when the field to be thus supplied is of any size, the process, as may be imagined, takes a good deal of time.

After the water has soaked well into the ground, making the surface soft, the process of ploughing is begun. Two buffaloes are yoked to a wooden plough and are driven by a man or boy, who cajoles them by a series of shrill squeaks, turning them to right or left with little taps from a long slender cane. The driver is up to his knees in the soft mud, and, like the buffaloes, splashed with it from head to foot, but he is so intent on keeping control over his clumsy animals that he never pauses to wipe his face.

The stubble and roots of the preceding harvest have not yet been removed, but now that they are loosened and that the usually hard dry surface is like a slushy pond, a harrow is run through. This is also drawn by two buffaloes, but the boy who drives in this case stands on the low instrument, his feet just above the level of the mud. He balances himself by holding on to the tails of his steeds.

The rice is now sown closely in a corner of the field, and only when it is four or five inches above the ground are the women summoned to plant it out. During the whole of its growth, till ready for cutting, it is a very bright green, of a shade seldom seen in Europe, and never over such a large surface. But the young shoots before being separated out are of a still more vivid colour. They form emerald green patches, the brilliance of which is enhanced by contrast with the

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muddy water extending all around them. When the women arrive the young men dig up the shoots, tie them into bundles or sheaves, and carry them over to one end of the field. Here the women await them, standing in a long line, with trousers already rolled up and the ends of their tunics fastened round their waists or tucked into their trousers, so that they shall not dip into the water. They have also pushed up their sleeves as far as the narrow cut of the wrist-band permits, but not far enough to prevent them from being caked with mud before the day is over. They keep on their hats, which hide a great part of their bent figures, for they are up to their knees in mud, and from a distance they look like a line of giant mushrooms.

As soon as the men give them the bundles they undo them and plunge the shoots one by one a few inches apart in the soft mud. They work very steadily, seldom raising themselves or looking around; but I have caught sight of many a roguish glance from under the big hats when the men bend down to place the rice in the girls' hands. It is true that, notwithstanding their ungraceful attitude and miry task, there is something fascinating about them at this moment. Perhaps the attraction lies in their tucked-up trousers and raised tunics, perhaps in the difficulty of seeing their faces under their mushroom hats, or perhaps in the cheeks, rosy with exertion, which one sees when standing upright for a second they undo a lappet of their tunic to wipe the perspiration and splashes of mud from their faces. It may be, too, that as men and women are seldom together this work furnishes a favourable oppor-

ONE OF THE TOWERS OF THE TCHAM TEMPLE AT NHATRANG

HE BALANCES HIMSELF ON THE HARROW BY MEANS OF HIS BUFFALOES' TAILS

ONE OF THE TRICKS FOR FLOODING A RICE-FIELD

WOMEN PLANTING OUT THE RICE

tunity for love-making. Even a husband and wife never walk close together in the village or in any public place, still less do men and women speak to each other when they meet by accident on the road. Besides the fetching of firewood from the forest, work in the rice-fields is the only occupation which draws the sexes together. Even in returning from the jungle with their stacks of wood, custom separates them by at least a hundred metres, though it is not likely that in the thick undergrowth and under the shady foliage they have kept that distance apart all the time.

The day's work done, men and women return to the homestead, to find the supper prepared by the housewife, and the water fetched by the elder children. At last they are at liberty to squat on the ground, their elbows resting on their outspread knees. This is the woman's favourite position in her leisure moments. The male members of the family will often devote themselves to their education, poring over dirty little books or scraps of paper on which are a few Annamese characters. The women, having seldom had the first elements of instruction even in childhood, rarely care to acquire any later in life.

When twilight deepens, the big saucepan of rice is brought to the fore and the contents divided into a number of little bowls, one for each member of the family. Other bowls contain broken-up fish, little pieces of roast pork, and one or two native vegetables. Each person picks up from these common dishes with his chopsticks a little morsel here and there, and, after first dipping it into the *nuoc-mam*, without which no Annamese meal is complete, flavours his own little

bowl to his liking. The Annamese never eat with their fingers; if they have no chopsticks at hand any slender pieces of wood picked up on the ground will do instead. They never drink while eating, but wait till the meal is finished.

Supper ended, the family generally retires at once; first the chattering of the children ceases, then the murmur of voices dies away altogether. Only the old man (*ong-gia*) does not sleep, but sits at the hut door in contemplation. After a time he too raises himself, and after choosing out a taper from a little red packet in a corner, lights it at the dying fire, and places it upright in the sand-filled vase on the altar. This last act of devotion accomplished, he lets down the bamboo door and complete silence reigns.

CHAPTER VI

THE MANDARIN AT HOME

How to become a mandarin : The esteem with which education is regarded in Annam : The mandarin's house and furniture : The Citadel : Visit to the Quan Bô of the province : Shaking hands : Refreshments : His family : Nicknames of the children : Respect due to the family name : The Quan Bô's return call : A brother of Thanh-Thai : Illness of one of his wives : The princess : A royal infant : A Chinese pipe : Snapshots

THERE is no permanent Annamese aristocracy, except in the Royal Family. Titles are not hereditary; they drop one degree with every generation, so that if the members of a family do nothing by personal effort to deserve a renewal of their former distinctions, the family soon loses its honourable estate. Any man in the kingdom may become a mandarin or high Government official, as all public offices are open to competition. This rule admits of a few exceptions. Those who render signal services to the country are entitled to similar honours. The citizen, for instance, who has succeeded in developing a certain amount of uncleared land, transforming jungle into rice-fields, is ennobled; even in this land of literary examinations, agriculture is rightly honoured. But yet it is the "literary" mandarin who of the two is held in the higher esteem. This demand

for efficiency should be of good omen for the future of the country, but it must be remembered that education in Annam is not progressive. The examinations of to-day are identical with those of many centuries ago.* The subjects are literature, language, the doctrines of Confucius. If they could be altered, and some of the energy now spent on letters could be devoted to science, the nation would make rapid progress.

The mandarin almost always lives in a brick-built house with verandahs running round, after the fashion of the European bungalow. The tiled roof is in many cases much ornamented, and the crest, instead of being a straight line, curves to form the profile of a dragon. Butterflies, bats, or lotus flowers are frescoed into the lime above doors and windows. As on the tombs, this is done by means of broken fragments of blue and green porcelain, but it is only on close inspection that one can see the hundreds of chips which have been required to complete a single design.

The house is generally whitewashed inside, but in spite of this the rooms do not have a clean appearance. All the Annamese, rich and poor, chew the betel-nut,† which makes a red saliva in the mouth, and this they spit out on floors and walls. The red stains are, of course, much more noticeable here than on the mud floors in the huts of the poorer classes, and give one a greater feeling of repugnance. Surely, if civilised enough to use whitewash, they ought to have learnt

* Lately attempts have been made to modernise the programme of study.

† This is really the nut of the areca-palm, cut up and wrapped in a leaf of the betel (*Piper betle*), which is first smeared over with lime.

not to spit on it! On the contrary, they are proud of the distance they can project their saliva, and one often sees small children competing with each other at this sport. The habit of chewing destroys any claim to beauty which the women might be said to possess, for it discolours their lips, and, together with the black lacquer used to preserve their teeth, makes the mouth a most repulsive feature.

My first glimpse of a mandarin's house was obtained the day we returned the visit of the *Quan Bô*, the chief Annamese administrator of the province. Annam, unlike Cochin-China, is at present only a French Protectorate, and in theory the Annamese officials have as much to say in the government of a province as the French Resident. They take their orders direct from the Ministers of the King at Hué. Nevertheless in practice they are ready to sanction any reform that the Resident proposes.

The Quan Bô's house, like those of most of the other great mandarins, is situated inside the Citadel,* fifteen kilometres from Nhatrang. When we came in sight of the walls, I recalled incidents which I had just been reading in the history of the region. It seemed astonishing that such walls and moats could ever have successfully withstood an attack. Yet there had been fought many a bloody combat in which the Citadel had been taken and re-taken—events had left their mark. The walls were still broken down in places, never having been reconstructed after the last assault;

* The "citadels" of Annam are rarely fortresses, but towns or villages, surrounded by ramparts, which become the centres of resistance in time of war.

the stagnant water of the moats was now covered with dirty green moss, except where beautiful lotus lilies hid the dank vegetation. The general appearance, though miserable and dirty, was still picturesque.

On the narrow bridge over the moat, we came to a standstill; the heavy Citadel door was shut. Some youngsters off the roadside had heard the horses' feet, however, and came running up, only too pleased to be of service to us. When the massive portals had been pushed back on their creaking wheels, we found the doorway only just wide enough for the passage of our cradle-cart. It reminded us of the entrance to a fortress of the Middle Ages, and as the doors swung back behind us, I felt rather like a fly entering a spider's web. Above the brickwork of the door was a sentinel's tower large enough to hold twenty or thirty men. Along the walls five men could walk abreast.

I was rather disappointed with the appearance of the village inside. We had been looking forward to the sight of something quite new, but at first discovered few novel features. The four roads which led towards the four gates of the ancient Citadel were symmetrical; they were also broader and in better repair than the stony, straggling paths of most villages; a huge building used as a granary in times of siege, and a vast prison, stood out conspicuously, but apart from these nothing exceptional arrested our attention. The same dank ponds, grass, bushes, trees, native huts with gardens, the same general disorder, in fact, met our gaze here as elsewhere.

The Quan Bô's house was off the principal road; as we drove into the courtyard in front, the silence and

solitude gave place to life and babble. Coolies ran here and there, heads peeped out from the windows, and children slid through the doors watching us open-mouthed and open-eyed. Many of these little mites were in coloured silk tunics, the soldiers wore the scarlet coat and little round hat of the bodyguard of a high Annamese official, so that touches of bright colour made a pleasing contrast to the everlasting indigo blue of people on the road.

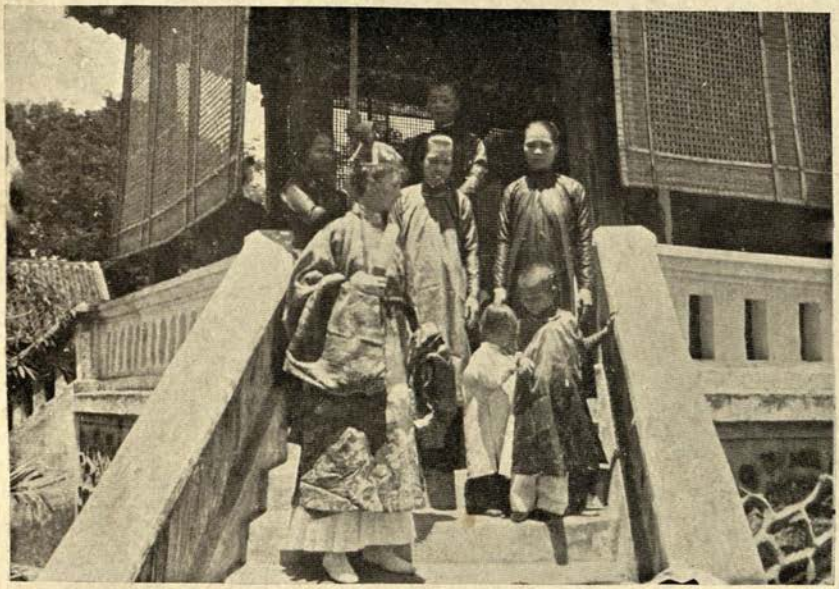
By the time we had mounted the verandah steps the Quan Bô had made his appearance and was waiting to greet us. He gave his hand to my husband and then to me. It was the first time I had shaken hands with an Annamese, and a shudder went through me when I felt in my own the uncanny dry-skinned fingers with their long nails. This simple and natural action brought home to me more strongly than ever the natural antipathy that exists between white and yellow races. In theory, I do not mind shaking hands with any of the mandarins who will condescend to do me that honour, but I can never do so without this consciousness.

It is true that the Annamese never shake hands among themselves, so that the gesture is an unfamiliar one; if equals, they simply bow with arms hanging down; for a respectful greeting they join their hands, open palm over closed fist, shaking them slightly up and down. The *lai*, which I have already described, is the salute of an inferior to a superior.

The Quan Bô was dressed in a brilliant sea-green tunic, a present from the King. It was a piece of silk unique both in dye and pattern, like those sometimes made for royalty. This was the only bright spot in

the room. All else was sombre and even slovenly. The furniture consisted of a very ordinary European table and a dozen chairs placed in two lines opposite each other. There were a few lacquered trays and round boxes, whose dark-coloured, highly polished wood was entirely inlaid with gleaming mother-of-pearl, some ancient blue porcelains and one or two Annamese pictures. These last were painted on strong flexible Chinese paper and were hung like kakemonos against the wall without frames. The subjects were the same as those on the tombs and pagoda walls, representations of Buddha either walking up a hill-side or sitting under a tree, or riding on a buffalo. He held the eternal fan in his hand, and an eagle, more resembling a swan or a peacock, followed in his footsteps. There were also pictures of the dragon, the unicorn, and the tortoise, the other three sacred animals. All the drawings were primitive and out of proportion.

I was very disappointed at not finding more Annamese ornaments, though my husband had warned me we should see nothing of any great interest or value. All the mandarins of Annam are poor, or, if not, they pretend to be so. The native governors of a province are not entitled to any fixed official salary; they are considered as the "father and mother" of the population they govern, and the "children" are supposed to provide the "parents" with all the necessaries of life. This arrangement is far from perfect, for the "parents" often take advantage of their position to extort large sums of money from their "children." But not the most well-to-do native governors, nor even the Ministers of Hué, can boast of wealth or



AT THE QUAN BÔ'S HOUSE

THE QUAN BÔ LENT ME HIS OFFICIAL ROBES

houses like those of the rich mandarins in Cochin-China or Tonking.

The Annamese are notoriously hospitable; we were offered champagne, but finally accepted tea. I was very thirsty after my long drive: my pleasant anticipation of a drink was slightly thwarted when I saw the tactics of the eldest son, who was doing the honours of the table. Finding the little Chinese tea-pot did not pour very well, he took it up, placed the spout in his mouth, and blew lustily down. To drink or not to drink, that was the question!

We asked our host after his wife and family, and though he did not offer to introduce us to his wife, he at once proposed to show us his children. Six little boys were brought into the room, all appearing to be between the ages of two and eight. I was ruminating over this fact, till I remembered that polygamy was both lawful and laudable in Annam. "All boys?" I said, with wonder. "I have four little girls, too," was the answer given me through the interpreter, and when I asked if they were not coming too, he had them fetched, but was evidently surprised at my taking any interest in them. Women cannot maintain the cult of ancestor-worship; the birth of a boy is therefore hailed with much greater delight than that of a girl. Polygamy is the direct result of this faith, for, if a man has no son, the link in the chain which binds generation to generation is broken. Such a disaster would not only affect the childless man, but all the former generations of the family.

I asked the children their names through the interpreter, and found that they were called *hai, ba, bon*

(two, three, four), according to the order in which they were born. Number one is always reserved for the mother. I remembered that I also had a *hai* and a *ba* among my servants, and realised that these names were thus given in every family. They had nicknames as well, but all of a most uncomplimentary character, such as dirt, slug, snail, pig, manure, &c. This seems strange until one remembers that in Annam one can never express admiration for a baby without causing its mother great anxiety, for if the "Ma" and "Qui" (devils) should overhear your remarks, they might covet the child and steal it. The congratulations to the proud mother on her newborn infant are therefore very different from those we are used to in England.

The family name of an Annamese is never mentioned either in speaking of a man or to him. It may be written for business purposes on a deed and on the ancestral tablets, but never in any ordinary correspondence. Even students in their examinations are not allowed to call a king by his proper name; it would be considered an act of *lèse majesté*. They must pronounce or spell it wrongly, or explain whom they mean by many periphrases.

When one man quarrels with another, he calls him by his proper name, or as the direst insult, he utters with contempt all the names of his ancestors. This is far worse than to call him a scoundrel, an assassin, a blackguard, or dog, and can never be forgiven.

All conversations between Annamese contain hidden meanings; every expression has a double sense. In this art the mandarins excel. The greatest ingenuity is displayed, and is highly appreciated by a nation

which denies any virtue to frankness. Indeed, they have a superstitious fear of the truth. In trials for theft, men will tell lie after lie, and even when obliged to confess by torture, it is not of the crime itself that they are ashamed, but of the acknowledgment of their guilt. A woman was once brought to my husband's infirmary dying from suffocation. She had stolen some jewels, and, to prevent herself revealing their hiding-place, whilst undergoing a severe beating she had bitten her tongue right through. It had swollen so much that it was impossible for her to take nourishment, and she could only breathe with difficulty. She obstinately refused all the doctor's aid, preferring to die rather than to live and be forced to divulge her secret. She recovered in spite of herself, and had again to be delivered into the hands of native justice. We never knew her fate.

When the children of the Quan Bô had been dismissed, we rose to take our leave. As we mounted the dog-cart, I saw our host look round for our servants; he was evidently surprised that we had come unattended. He himself on his visit to us had brought six or seven followers; in fact, when I had seen the little group coming in at the garden gate, I had wondered how I should seat all my visitors. However, the native bodyguard who had drawn his rickshaw remained outside, and only his interpreter and boy entered the house. The latter is an individual much to be pitied. He must always be at hand; wherever his master goes he must follow, often on foot. It is not uncommon to meet a mandarin riding or driving, his wretched boy running behind with all his

might, often in a great state of exhaustion. It is he who carries his master's smoking materials, which do not consist of a mere pipe and tobacco-pouch. No mandarin travels without a big, oblong, lacquered box fitted with trays divided into different compartments, in which, besides pipes and tobacco, visiting-cards, Chinese pen and ink, betel leaves, lime, and all the materials for chewing are carried. The mandarin keeps the key of this precious box on his person, and from time to time during conversation he calls to the boy, opens the box, and provides himself with what he needs. It is often said that Europeans are too exacting with their native servants, but I have seen no task imposed by them so arduous as this.

A short time ago we paid a call on the brother of the ex-king, a mandarin of much higher rank. When Thanh-thai was deposed in 1907, he and most of his family were obliged to leave Hué and the Court. Thanh-Thai himself was sent to the Cap St. Jacques, where the residence of the Governor-General was put at his disposal till a new palace could be built for him in Cochin-China. His family and adherents did not fare so well. His brother, Prince Thuyen Hoa, till then the highest and most influential mandarin in the country, after the king, was brought to Nhatrang. In such an out-of-the-way spot he naturally found no friends or companions of his own standing, and not having been allowed to bring away his horses and motors from the capital, he was cut off from the rest of the province. His stipend from the Government probably does not permit him to buy new ones, he feels it beneath his dignity to ride in a rickshaw, and

he is therefore practically a prisoner in his house at the Citadel. It is said that he has scarcely enough money to keep up the large retinue of wives and servants which he brought with him.

It was in connection with one of their number that we became acquainted with him. He wrote to my husband asking him to call and medically attend her for a slight illness. Such a demand, even from a member of the Royal House who had mixed freely with Europeans, surprised us. It was a marked sign of progress, as it was for his own wife that he asked assistance.

I accompanied my husband on his second visit to the patient, and was introduced to the Prince. He was an intelligent-looking youth of about twenty-six, with manners almost European and a good French accent. His hair was cut short and parted at the side, but he still wore the black Annamese turban. He was in white cotton trousers and a black openwork tunic, something like a very fine black silk mantilla. He wore a little thin gold plate indicating his title in Annamese characters; such ornaments in ivory are worn by all mandarins. On his breast was also pinned the red ribbon of the Légion d'honneur. This reminds me of a story which illustrates Annamese wit. The same honour had been conferred upon the ex-king. When the French were taking an inventory of all the valuables of his palace upon his departure, the king holding up the order exclaimed sarcastically, "Here is a valuable you have forgotten to include."

After a few minutes' conversation, his wife (wife of the first rank) entered the room, and his little two-year-

old daughter. Clearly intercourse with Europeans was frequent; it is not Annamese etiquette for a mandarin's wife to appear when any but a lady visitor is present.

The Princess was pretty, with a clear and a very white complexion, in fact, as regards colouring, she might have been mistaken for a European. Her hair, very smoothly brushed back, was done up in a waving chignon at the back of her head, in the same manner as other Annamese women, but with much more care and *chic*. She wore several tunics one over the other, but as all were of light feathery silk, they must have caused no inconvenience, and the colours, as perceived through the slits up the sides of the tunic, harmonised admirably. The top one was a glorious shade of opal pink. It was fastened by means of tiny round gold buttons instead of the ordinary stuff ones. The sleeves were in the height of Annamese fashion, and so narrow at the wrist that I could not imagine how the Princess had managed to get her hands, slender though they were, through them. Her gold bracelets were fastened over the sleeves and clung tightly to the arm.

Her trousers were of black satin, and the tips of her toes were slipped into tiny ornamented Annamese shoes. A woman's feet are one of her chief attractions, and she is careful not to hide them too effectually; though the richer class of women possess slippers, their feet lie *on* them rather than *in* them. The "carmine heel," so much admired, can thus display its full charm.

The little girl, though very shy at first, consented after a time to come up to us and say *bonjour* with the quaintest little bow imaginable. Her name, "Bai,"

A MANDARIN IN HIS GARDEN

TWO MANDARINS WITH THEIR HOUSEHOLD AND RETAINERS

meaning "Little Worry," was truer than most nicknames. Bai's head was shaved as clean as the palm of one's hand, except for two little triangles at each side, where the hair had been allowed to grow and hung down to her neck. Though curious, this coiffure was not ugly; in fact it gave her a piquant and rather attractive look. It was much tidier than the tuft of hair left at the crown of the head of the peasant child. She was dressed entirely in yellow, the royal colour, which till lately was prohibited to all subjects of the kingdom, and indeed is never worn even now. Her nurse brought her into the room. Though the child was over two years old, she was still being fed from the breast. My conversation with the Princess was carried on under difficulties, as I could seldom understand the interpreter, and, unlike her husband, she spoke no French. The entrance of tea was therefore a welcome interruption. Little stands of finely carved wood had already been placed in front of us as we sat solemnly round the table, and now two more servants appeared, one of whom held a tray on which were little blue bowls of steaming tea. These were put on the little wooden stands. The tea was, I believe, of an ancient and priceless blend, but alas! its charm was lost for me; I cannot enjoy tea without sugar.

Between the sips of tea, a Chinese pipe, a most complicated instrument, made up of a jar containing water, a little receptacle above for the tobacco, and a long thin piece of bamboo, was brought to the Princess. The jar was of jade, very valuable and over two hundred years old. As the pipe could not hold more than two pinches of tobacco, the Princess was never

able to take more than one whiff at a time, and was therefore constantly requiring the pipe to be brought to her. I found it most fascinating to watch the servant sliding noiselessly up to her, kneeling down, and dexterously putting a match to the tobacco the instant that the bamboo touched her lips.

These interruptions made the process of tea drinking somewhat slow, but the ceremoniousness of the occasion was happily interrupted by the baby Princess. She suddenly began talking volubly and emphatically to her nurse, and as she had been quiet and shy up to that moment I asked the interpreter what she wanted. "She demands that her trousers be removed," said that official promptly, but with great seriousness. I was so taken aback by the unexpected reply that for a moment I did not know whether to laugh or be shocked. However, I remembered on reflection that the child, like her poorer compatriots, generally ran about the house without that garment, and had had enough of it. Her request, however, could not be granted owing to our presence. I had brought my camera with me in the hope of getting a few snapshots. All tea-time I had anxiously watched the sun getting lower and lower. I knew, however, that etiquette is of the greatest importance in the eyes of the Oriental, and having never seen an Annamese hurry I curbed my impatience as best I could. The light was very bad by the time the Prince and Princess at last posed themselves stiffly on high-backed chairs on the verandah for the operation. When they had been taken in several positions, the Prince turned to my husband and asked him to take a photograph of the whole household. It

had never entered my head that we should have a chance of seeing the other wives, and I was very grateful for the opportunity. But I was a little disappointed when they gathered on the verandah to find that it was impossible to distinguish the wives from the servants. They were all young and rather nice-looking, but none had the distinguished air of the Princess. From the short glimpse we had of them, they seemed to be a happy and united family—no doubt far happier than in the days when they lived amid the intrigues of the Palace.

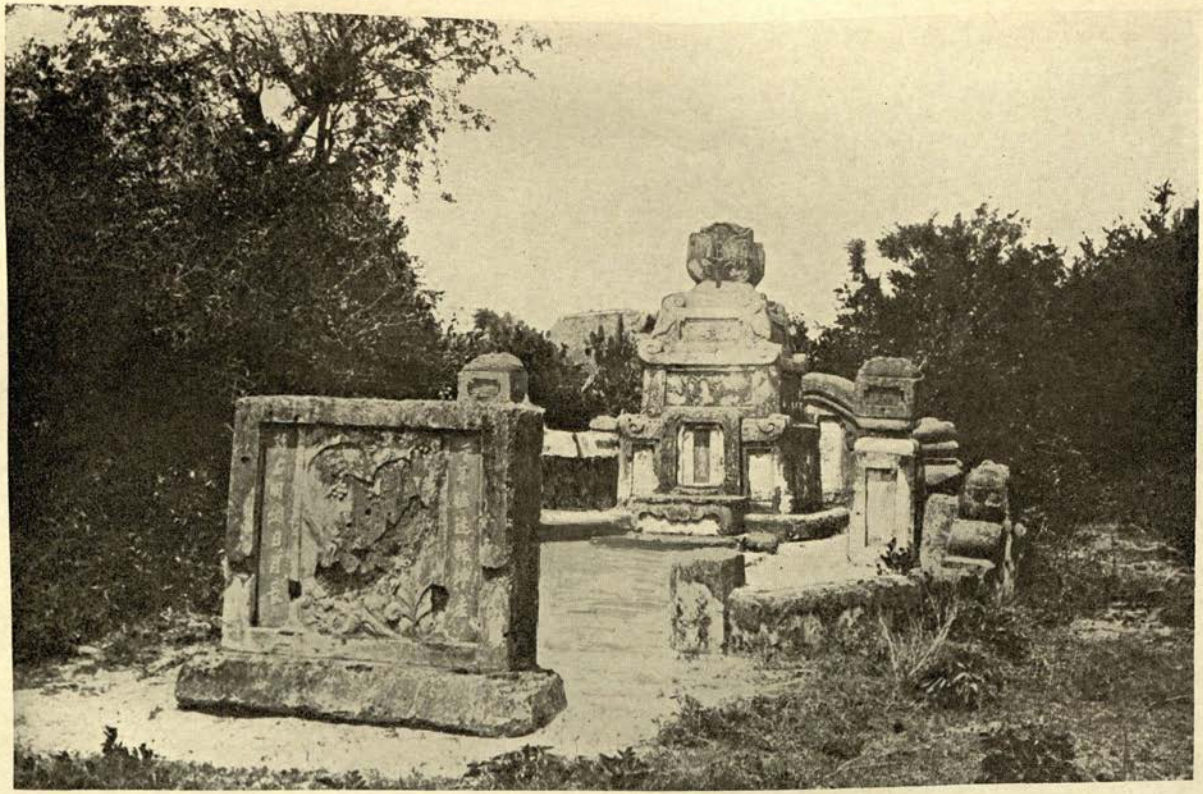
CHAPTER VII

RELIGIOUS RITES AND SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS

Religious systems of Annam : The scepticism of the native : Spirits and genii : Countryside shrines : The shrine to the tiger : Superstitions concerning the tiger : Ancestor-worship : The benefits to family life of this cult : Its ceremonies : The death and funeral of a believer : The practice of polygamy

RELIGION and superstition are so intermingled in the mind of the Annamese and in his performance of all rites and ceremonies, that it is impossible to speak of one without the other.

Different religions are recognised in the country, but none has a distinct body of adherents: an Annamese will worship indifferently at a Buddhist or Taoist pagoda, the distance or a pecuniary consideration alone guiding him in his choice. It is not, indeed, rare to find on the same altar, side by side with the image of Buddha, a statue of Confucius and of Laotseu, the founder of the Taoist religion. This illustrates the confusion which reigns in the religious systems of Annam; their original distinctiveness lost, superstition and sorcery have had no difficulty in introducing themselves. Europeans can hardly understand this attitude of mind, which makes no effort to reconcile conflicting theories. It is in a great measure this eclecticism which has



THE TOMB OF A VILLAGE NOTABLE

enabled missionaries to convert such large numbers to Christianity. Toleration, a good trait in a nation's character, is here so wide as to lead to scepticism and apathy. The Annamese is often Buddhist, Taoist, Confucianist, all in one, while quite incapable of distinguishing the creed and ceremonials belonging to each faith. The precepts of Confucius are those which make the strongest appeal to his intelligence, but none influence his daily actions or call forth anything beyond an ignorant veneration. It is the worship of the various spirits and genii, which, as he believes, hover about him at work or in sleep, and still more ancestor-worship, which guide and control his whole life. These two creeds embody all the hopes and fears of the mass of the population. The first regards the elements and all natural phenomena as endowed with a living spirit, and assigns not only to men and animals, but even to things and places, a rank and gender. The spirits commonly worshipped in Annam may be divided into three classes: the Celestial, or those in space, from one of whom all the great dynasties declare themselves to be descended; the Genii of the Waters (it is in the depth of the sea that the land of departed spirits is placed); and the Genii of the Earth, who protect certain portions of the country as well as the village and the home.

Every trade again, with the particular tools belonging to it, is under the protection of some supernatural power. The peasant makes a sacrifice not only to the Celestial Genii, but to the spirit of his buffaloes; the fisherman not only to the Genii of the Waters, but to those of his nets; the merchant to those of his baskets, &c. &c.

Small shrines are erected in every conceivable corner to these spirits, so that, including the pagodas, where Buddha, Confucius, and Laotseu are promiscuously worshipped, it requires all the goodwill of the credulous Annamese to perform his religious duties properly. The number of altars belonging to a single village is sometimes very considerable. Moreover, in the large pagodas, bonzes officiate who live solely by alms. The faithful must therefore bring food for the priests as well as their gifts for the altar.

Shrines are not necessarily in the neighbourhood of a village; indeed, as one wanders through the country, one comes upon them in most unexpected places, and often quite out of the beaten track. Just as the pagodas are generally situated on some hill where there is a beautiful view, so the sites of these shrines are never wanting in attraction. Sometimes they are right in the midst of some bushes, or on the lower branches of a tree, so that the halo of green all round sets them off to advantage. They never seem neglected; the poorest little edifice can boast of a taper or two, a faded flower, or some silver and gilded paper.

When out hunting we have sometimes lighted on one of these small temples in some far-off lonely spot, and have suddenly been reminded that we are trespassing on "my Lord Tiger's" domain, for, represented on a screen inside, is "Ong Kop" himself. The elephant, silkworm, and rat enjoy a real cult, but the animal which is most venerated and which inspires the greatest number of superstitions and traditions is the tiger. He is never mentioned without his title, and within the forest the coolie will no longer mention

him at all; he makes a clawing sign with his hand if he wishes to indicate that the dreaded monster is near.

More than once the population of a village has liberated a tiger caught in a trap. When, in the early morning, the presence and plight of His Majesty have been made known, all the Annamese in the region collect round him, and after making *lais* to him and praying him not to take revenge on them for the insult, they make a deafening noise with their tom-toms, open his prison door, and let him escape!

As may be imagined, the organised tiger hunt is almost an impossibility in Annam, the few individuals who, having no personal fear, might consent to act as beaters, being prevented by the rest of the villagers. For, even if the tiger was not killed, the mere attempt would be such an act of disrespect that later, not only those who took part in the hunt, but the whole village, would assuredly suffer. There is also another thing to be considered. A man caught and eaten by Ong Kop would remain unburied, for in all probability his family would be unable to find his bones. Such a disaster would be worse than death itself, for souls abandoned and deprived of burial suffer such terrible agony that they become spirits of the most injurious kind, revenging themselves on generation after generation.

This anxiety for the funeral ceremonial has sometimes been known to cause the premature death of a sick man. My husband's infirmary boy once arrived in the middle of the night, to say that a native patient was dead and that his family had come for the body. My husband was slightly surprised, as he expected

this man to live another few days, but as he is obliged to let patients come and go as they please, it was useless to make a protest. The next afternoon a friend told us that he had met a procession of natives carrying the unlucky patient—who was then still alive, but suffering agonies with every movement of the palanquin. His relations were so desirous of having the body, that they could not curb their impatience to wait till he was dead! They preferred taking away his last chance of life!

But to return to the tiger. He, like other animals, undergoes transformations under different circumstances and at different times. For instance, at the age of fifty he can change into an old woman, at the age of a hundred into a young and beautiful maiden, though one who is dangerous to her admirers. There are numbers of popular stories of this sort. It is natural, therefore, that all the little temples dedicated to Ong Kop should be honoured by sacrifices, offered rather in the hope of appeasing the deity and winning his favour than from any feeling of devotion. In the same manner, the evil Genii are revered far more than the good Genii, for every misfortune, great or small, is attributed to the neglect of one of them.

All this worship of gods and spirits holds, however, a subordinate place in comparison with ancestor-worship, upon which is concentrated all the real religious fervour of the people. This is the basis upon which all morals and customs are founded, and it governs all social and domestic life. In the East it is said that "the dead rule the living," and there is much truth in the statement. Happily the influence of this religion

is almost entirely good. One of its chief dogmas is the care, consideration, and respect due to the older members of a family. However old and feeble the head of the household may he, he rules with a rod of iron. His wish is law. The woman, even, as soon as she becomes a *ba-gia*, enjoys an influence far greater than in her youth. A man takes advice from his mother more readily than from his wife.

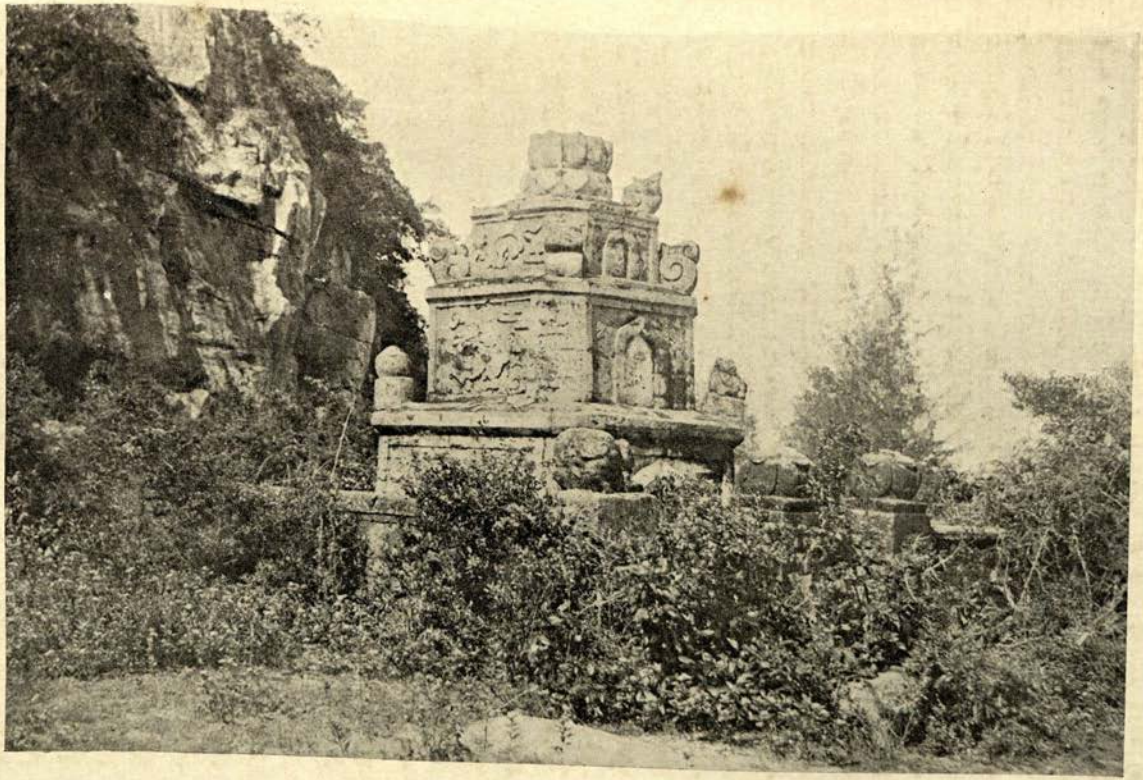
It is not only in the family that this devotion and submission are noticeable. Any individual on the road with grey hair or other indication of age is addressed by a title denoting great respect.

Another result of ancestor-worship is a love of children. The Annamese are most devoted parents, and if it were not for their ignorance of hygiene, they would be model fathers and mothers.

Children are brought up not only with the idea of what is due to their parents in old age, but of what is due to them after death. They must strictly observe all the rites of ancestor-worship when, on fête days, their father performs the ceremonies, for later one of them will take his place. The chief ceremonies are held just before the Têt (the Annamese New Year) and on the anniversaries of the deaths of the parents. No member of the family must be absent on this occasion; punishments can even be inflicted by law for such an offence. The offerings placed on the altar at this time are more important than at any other season during the year, and in rich families they are increased daily. On the day of the ceremony, the head of the family dons his best robes, lights the tapers on the altar, and before the assembled family goes through a ritual

which is punctilious in all its forms. He opens the service by pouring wine into three glasses on the altar and saying: "I respectfully invite your presence, great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, uncles, and aunts, to this reception, which your descendants humbly offer you with all their heart," or words to that effect. He then prostrates himself before the altar. A pause follows during which he and each one of the assembly must endeavour to think that he is in the presence of his ancestors, who have come to the altar to take part in the banquet. The service then continues, more wine is poured out, other words are pronounced, and more prostrations follow, in fact, a strict ritual is enjoined.

We see, therefore, that the immortality of the soul is firmly believed in by the Annamese; other customs show how death is his constant preoccupation. Soon after middle age his chief desire is to provide himself with a coffin; it must be the best that his means can procure. When he has found one that pleases him, he carries it to his home, where it forms the most prominent and richest article of furniture. A mandarin of Nhatrang once asked my husband to attend his brother in a serious illness. When he heard that the patient could not possibly recover, his distress was most acute. On a later visit, however, my husband found him in such a happy, serene frame of mind, that he thought a miracle must have happened. The mandarin, in joyous excitement, led him to his brother's side, and there, at the foot of the bed, was a finely carved, brilliantly painted coffin. The patient, though very weak, raised himself to have one more look at



AN ANNAMESE TOMB

his treasure, and evidently felt that death had now lost all its terrors. He was full of gratitude to the donor. The mandarin's distress had been due not only to the knowledge that he must lose his brother, but to the fact that his coffin was not ready! Now that it had been finished in time, and all preparations for death made, he could await the end with calm.

The death of an Annamese gives rise to a very curious custom. It is necessary to capture the soul as it leaves the body, in order to place it inside the tablet which is conspicuous on every altar. For this purpose, when the dying man is about to breathe his last, a piece of silk is placed on his breast, into which the soul is supposed to pass. As soon as the man is dead, the silk is hung inside the "chariot of the soul" which in every funeral precedes the coffin. After the funeral the silk is taken out and rubbed over the tablet, which has meanwhile been inscribed with the names, titles, and occupation of the deceased; the soul by this means passes from one to the other. This tablet is generally kept in a red lacquered box, and is the most revered object on the altar. Rich families carefully preserve the different tablets of the family for five generations, but it is considered no breach of respect if only those of the parents are kept. When the soul is safely deposited in the tablet, the piece of silk is buried in some spot indicated by a sorcerer, never beside the coffin.

Many are the superstitious rites of a funeral when the family can afford to observe them all. It is not a very mournful affair, for though the women weepers cry and wail, one never forgets that they are paid for

the work. The colouring is gay and the discordant music has not a melancholy effect. Tom-toms, clarinets, and three or four Chinese violins generally precede the procession. Each fiddler scrapes away without ceasing, apparently taking no heed of the time or tune of his fellows. Then comes the "chariot of the soul" borne aloft on poles by half a dozen coolies. It is a kind of paper tabernacle. On each side are drawings and brilliantly coloured designs, dragons and other sacred animals as well as many Annamese characters. Behind this come one or several altars, on which are placed all the family heirlooms, bronze ornaments, porcelain vases, and often a picture of the dead person painted by an Annamese artist.

The coffin is carried on a sort of catafalque, which is borne by a mass of coolies; the richer the funeral, the greater the number. Each coolie has in his mouth a piece of wood, which is supposed to be a help to him in carrying his burden. The movements of the bearers are directed by a native, a master of the ceremonies, who stands on the catafalque itself. From this elevated position he can see and be seen by every one. In front of him is a glass of water, and his whole endeavour is to keep the coffin so level that not a drop shall be spilt. From the moment the coffin leaves the house till it is safely deposited in the grave, he does not cease gesticulating or screaming orders. When the ground is uneven or a slope must be mounted, he watches the glass at his feet with increased intensity, and works himself into a frenzy of excitement. As a last resort, when all his vocabulary

is exhausted, and the coolies seem no longer to listen to his ejaculations, he offers ten cents, then twenty, then a dollar, to each bearer, if not a drop of water is spilt.

Behind the catafalque walk the bereaved relatives. They are dressed in white, with white turbans. Their trousers are without a hem round the ankles, for the frayed ends of white cotton are a sign of mourning. They maintain a grave and dignified attitude, very different from that of the hired women weepers who follow them. Occasionally they are provided with sticks or supported by coolies on either side; they are so bowed down with grief that they can no longer walk alone.

The period of mourning for every relative is precisely indicated, and in general faithfully observed. The rules of conduct during that time are strict, and any disregard of them is punishable by law. Some are very severe: for instance, the sons of the deceased man are not allowed to marry for three years after his death, or, if already married, they must not have a child.

When the head of a family dies, he does not leave his money in equal portions to all his children; the eldest son has always the largest share, so that he may be in a position to continue the ceremonies of ancestor-worship. Sometimes a large sum of money is bequeathed expressly for this purpose, and goes from eldest son to eldest son for many generations. The law of the land sees that this money is not perverted from its original purpose. If a man leaves nothing, the family often subscribe a sum which is put into the hands of the eldest son.

To die leaving no son is therefore a terrible catastrophe to the Annamese, for the acts of devotion of a lifetime are rendered void. Though the richer classes practise polygamy willingly, it is this necessity alone which causes a poor Annamese to take a second wife. He probably cannot afford to have two, and if he is not rich enough to please both, the quiet of his home is destroyed. Jealousy and discord reign; the calm, placid tenor of his existence is ended. There is an Annamese proverb, "More than one wife, no peace," and not long after my arrival in the country, I had a personal proof of the truth of the saying. I was taking my siesta in the hot part of the afternoon, when I was startled out of my doze by fearful shrieks coming from the direction of the kitchen. I jumped up and rushed there, supposing that at least a kettle of boiling water had scalded two or three individuals. I think my boy would have preferred that to the actual fact. His wife and the woman he had told me was his sister were in violent altercation. Beside themselves with fury, their hair down, their tunics torn, they had just fallen apart after a hand-to-hand scuffle. At the moment of my arrival, their rage had turned on my boy. He would have escaped altogether if I had let him. With my hands to my ears, I shouted to him to make them stop screaming and yelling, but he was quite unable to do so. My efforts to drive them both out of the garden were vain, so I returned to my bedroom, though too agitated to resume my siesta. I dreaded lest anybody, attracted by the noise, should come and see my helplessness. Fortunately it was my husband who was the first to approach the house;

in a minute he had put a stop to the disturbance, and I saw two coolies carrying the women out of the garden gate. Their screams and oaths did not abate during this treatment, and I imagined them continuing their duel on some isolated spot on the sands till one or both dropped from exhaustion. The two coolies looked even more dishevelled than usual as they came back later, wiping the perspiration from their faces with their dirty turbans before replacing them round their chignons. They required a big tip after that feat!

There was no need to ask my boy the reason of the quarrel. It was apparent. His legal wife, who brought him his lunch, had, by mismanagement, met his "sister," who brought him his supper. Not only had his wife not been invited to choose for him the secondary wife, as is the usual custom, but she had not even been informed of his intention of taking one. I uttered no reproach; his punishment had begun, and who could say where it would end?

CHAPTER VIII

THE SOCIAL POSITION OF WOMEN

Marriage laws : Betrothal and divorce : Betrothal and marriage ceremonials : Polygamy : Social situation : Education and occupations : Peculiarities of Annamese beauty : Generalities

ACCORDING to Annamese law, which is of earlier date than the French Civil Code, a woman is the equal of her husband. The law says literally, "the wife is an equal" (Thê gia tê râ); but in practice this is not quite true.

The Annamese woman at her marriage does not necessarily take her husband's name, but may keep her maiden name.

In Annam, as in China, marriage is considered too important a matter to be left to the chances of inclination or love. It is the parents' business to make the arrangements and settle the affair, often without consulting those most interested. There is good reason for this custom. Marriage takes place at a very early age. Advice is surely needed between the ages of fourteen and sixteen; and the marriageable age for boys is sixteen, and for girls fourteen years. According to the Annamese mode of reckoning, these ages may be in reality much less, for a new-born baby is reckoned a year at its birth, and two at the next Têt, the Annamese new year.

A long engagement is, however, allowed. The betrothal constitutes the first legal contract. It is consummated as soon as the fiancée accepts presents. Should the young man break off the engagement, he loses the presents he has given to his fiancée. Should the girl be the defaulter, she can be claimed by her first fiancé, even though married to some one else.

Marriages with blood relations are punished with the greatest severity. For instance, a man marrying his paternal aunt is liable to immediate decapitation. He may marry his deceased wife's sister, which appears natural enough to all Western nations except the English, who have only just managed to pass a Bill in its favour. He is even allowed to choose wives from among the sisters of his first wife. On the contrary, he may incur the sentence of strangulation should he marry his brother's widow.

All sorts of unions are prohibited because they might upset the hierarchical basis of the family. The primordial authority of the husband must never be put in question.

If the Annamese, with their reserved and sceptical nature, do not attach great importance to the ceremonies and dogmas of Buddhism, they show at least a profound respect for all those relating to ancestor-worship. So it comes about that paternal authority and tradition constitute the fundamental principles of the family. There is in each home an altar and a priest, but it is the male only who is qualified to officiate. Here is the source of great social inequality. As is often the case in other countries man has made use of religion to increase his privileges.

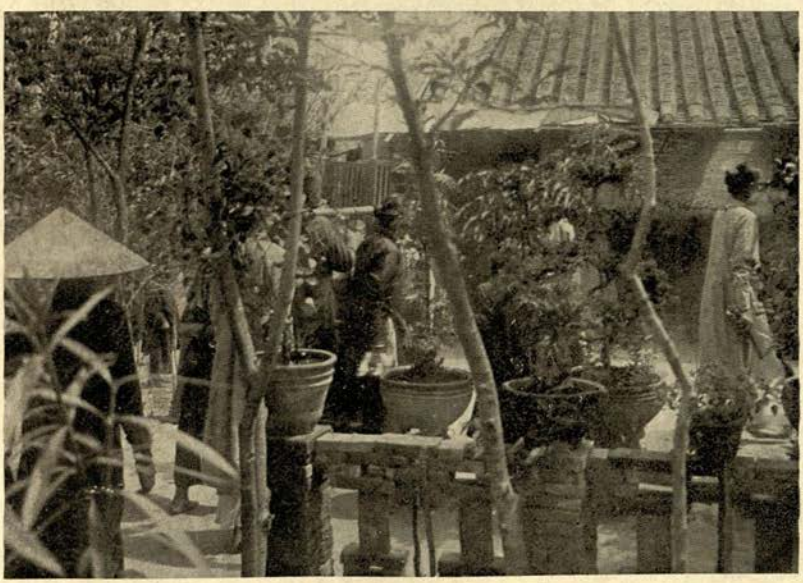
The birth of a son not only confers a celestial benediction on an Annamese, as on the Brahman of India, but it also imposes on him a stern and sacred duty. If Nature is not propitious in granting him a son, the law has infinite resources for helping him. In fact, this is in every case the excuse for polygamy and adoption of heirs. The childless wife may be restored to her parents: she who is the mother of girls only may be replaced by another wife.

It is common in Annam for a man who has only one daughter to adopt a son-in-law, as the Hebrews did of old, but as a son-in-law cannot be held responsible for the ancestral cult it is necessary to adopt a second son who will take his place as the head of the family. While the Chinese is able to choose whom he will for this purpose, the Annamese is limited to paternal nephews and cousins, as in Greece and in India.

In the matter of inheritance, "the portion for the incense and the fire" is always provided for; this constitutes a sort of tithe which benefits the eldest or the adopted son. This arrangement made, the widow inherits the estate of her husband. According to the letter of the law, daughters are excluded from inheritance, as are their Chinese sisters, but in practice there is an equal division of property irrespective of sex.

According to the "*Dich Kinh*," marriage is indissoluble. More modern laws, however, make provision for divorce. There are seven permissible excuses for divorce, differing only slightly from those prevailing in China. They are: sterility, misconduct, theft, jealousy, excessive garrulity, want of respect towards parents-in-law, and incurable diseases such as leprosy and

A WEDDING PROCESSION



THE WEDDING PROCESSION ENTERING BRIDE'S GARDEN

epilepsy. However, there are certain exceptions which show wisdom and humanity in the law-makers. It is impossible for a man to divorce his wife should they have started their married life in poverty and should later have become prosperous; neither can he reject her if she no longer has relations to whom she can go.

No excuse is admitted for adultery; a *flagrant delit* proved, the husband is allowed to kill the guilty couple. Formerly a guilty wife was exposed in a public place to be trampled to death by elephants. She was bound in a kneeling position to a post and covered with a black veil. The elephant was then let loose, rushed on the unhappy woman, and tore her limbs asunder with its tusks. The punishment was later reduced to ninety strokes with the cane, and at the present time a man sells his wife or even keeps her. In Indo-China cases of savage vengeance are becoming rarer and rarer, but not long ago a guilty couple might be seen bound to a raft and abandoned to the current. They were even sometimes crucified one against the other, hands and feet nailed together, and their mouths united by filling them with melted resin. To-day custom admits of divorce by mutual consent.

The Annamese wife is married under the law of community of property. Thus the husband never fails in buying or selling land to mention his wife's name. The Commune inscribes her personal rights on the scroll and the trader does not forget her in important transactions.

The precepts relative to marriage are to be found in the "*Ly-hi*," or memorial of rites, inspired by the

doctrine of Confucius. "The marriage rite completes a union between two persons of different names, in such a manner that they may serve their ancestors of the past in their temple and train future generations in their traditions." Thus we see that Annamese civilisation, after borrowing from and being mingled with Chinese civilisation during many centuries, tends at present to follow an original track.

The Annamese marriage is, according to Luro, a free contract between those desiring it. It is rather an agreement between two families. Public authorities interfere very little. The go-between is not an official, but he is legally responsible. The details of all marriage ceremonies may be found in the Chinese Codes of the twelfth century B.C. They at first comprised six rites, but these have been greatly reduced, and few people observe them faithfully.

The go-between is generally a friend of the two families, but in big towns he is often a professional and has a big practice, knowing a great many people and being well versed in all ceremonials. The man first sends him to the home of the girl, where a proposal is made to the parents, and if the answer is favourable, the family of the young man sends them his name, age, day of birth, on a red card. The agent receives the same notifications from the girl's parents. Soothsayers are then consulted in order to know if the families and ages of the couple suit each other. This ceremony is omitted if the parents of the couple are very anxious for the marriage and fear an unfavourable answer. The go-between fixes the wedding-day, and meantime the parents redouble their sacrifices and

prayers to their ancestors. The young man's duties then begin. Followed by a procession of relations of village chiefs, he presents himself in due course to the family of the girl and offers her presents, such as betel- and areca-nuts, and choum-choum. If these are accepted, the aspirant is from that moment considered as a son-in-law. In the case of poor families he then lives under the same roof as his fiancée. In more prosperous families the young man returns to his own home, and does not visit his fiancée again till the day fixed for his betrothal.

This is the second great function. On this occasion he again offers betel- and areca-nuts, also bracelets, coloured silks, two red tapers, two little cups of rice alcohol, and a little roasted pig.

The procession is very gay and picturesque. All are dressed in their richest costumes, many carrying parasols, the flute-players playing vigorously. On arriving at the dwelling of the fiancée, the presents are placed on the altar, the red tapers are lighted, and the alcohol is poured into the cups. The two fathers get up together and prostrate themselves before the altar, afterwards the two mothers. A feast, at which all details of etiquette are strictly observed, ends the ceremony.

The wedding-day is even more imposing. The father of the young man assembles all the relatives of the family in front of the ancestral altar, and there presents to them the child he is going to marry. He then for the third time directs his steps towards his fiancée's home. He is preceded by servants carrying

presents and surrounded by a crowd of friends and relations. After a parley outside, all enter the house and range themselves round the altar. The fiancé prostrates himself before the altar, and then goes up to his parents-in-law and offers them wine and betel-nuts. His own father meanwhile reads the inventory of the presents.

The couple are then taken into the room reserved for them, and standing before the altar dedicated to the divinities of marriage, on which tapers are lighted and incense burning, the parents wish them a long posterity and exhort them to remain united till death. This is the most solemn moment of the whole ceremony. Formerly it was then that the young wife raised her veil and the husband pretended to see her for the first time. The wife now prostrates herself four times before her husband, he once before his wife. They exchange cups of alcohol, and the ceremony is terminated. A banquet then takes place in which the young couple join.

Marriages among the poor are much less complicated, and those of wives of a second rank often consist of a simple contract of sale.

The practice of polygamy among the Annamese differs widely. The King of Annam has a great number of wives, but even the greatest mandarins rarely have more than four or five. The poor of necessity possess only one, for it is mere worldly fortune that regulates the number of wives. A travelling merchant or official generally has a family in each of his principal business centres, the wife acting as his commercial agent and steward. Some authors say

that polygamy is due to the preponderance of female births, but it is also on account of the desire to secure to the richest and most gifted the largest posterity.

The legal wife is called the wife of the first degree: "*vo chanh.*" She takes an important position in the household. She is the queen of the hearth. All the secondary wives, servants, &c., owe her obedience; all the children respect and honour her. At her death mourning is worn for three years, while for the death of any of the other wives it is only worn for one year, and then only by her own children. At the death of the father all the children of the different wives receive the same amount. The first legal wife retains a life interest in her husband's property. The possessions of each mother are divided among her own children.

It may be observed that the social condition of the Annamese woman has attained a high standard. Many Western civilisations have not recognised the rights of women to a greater extent.

Knowledge is much appreciated by the Annamese, who only choose their officials from among their scholars. Every degree obtained by examinations corresponds to a hierarchical office, so that Annam may be quoted as an ideal democracy, in which power only belongs to the best educated. Even the very poorest peasant is capable of writing some hundreds of characters and of wording a petition. In every Annamese Commune an elementary school exists, but for little boys only. The little girl does not go to the village school. This is an important fact to remember

in studying the life of the Annamese woman. There seems to be no law to prohibit it, and indeed the law-makers of Annam, liberated from Chinese influence, have evinced a progressive tendency in the matter of women's rights, and would never have committed such an injustice. It is simply a question of custom, but more than anything it hinders the progress of women.

The little Annamese girl is therefore obliged to get what instruction she can at home. If her parents are poor and have not time to teach her, she grows up in the most complete ignorance. The study of the characters is long and difficult; the memory of youth is necessary, as they are not easily acquired after childhood. There are some little girls who pick up enough characters to enable them later to keep accounts or help in a business.

There are, too, a few women belonging to the noble and rich classes who have received a thoroughly good education. These are able to read, understand, and discuss Confucius.

Before the French occupation there was not a single school for girls in the whole of Annam. Missionaries broke through this tradition by educating their girl orphans. There are at the present moment women in the position of station-masters at Saigon and Hanoi, and in the latter town several large silk and incrustation manufactories are managed exclusively by women.

The wives of artisans are noted for being as keen and clever in business as their husbands, and it is for this reason that it is no uncommon thing for Chinese merchants to choose Annamese wives.

The chief wives of the mandarins do no manual labour, as that would be considered below their dignity. They occasionally make cakes or sweets for amusement, but the daily duties of the household, such as the preparation of meals, sewing and cleaning, are all left to the other women of the harem. They never weave or embroider, in fact, how could they possibly do it? for their nails are allowed to grow to ten or fifteen centimetres in length! They spend a good deal of time in music and singing.

It is rather surprising to find that among the Annamese women, who are naturally such good and healthy mothers, those of the richer classes never nurse their own babies, but allow them to be reared by a paid wet-nurse. A mandarin told me that only one in a thousand nursed her own baby.

The flowers are arranged by the mistress of the house, who is also responsible for the dwarf trees and miniature artificial gardens. Another of her principal duties is to fill and arrange the box of betel-nuts. Much time is also devoted to her toilet, and there seems no end to all its details; her ablutions and all sorts of massage, her lips and eyebrows to paint, her nails to polish, different costumes to try on, her headdress to change, the different perfumed pomades to choose for her hands, and last but not least, the smiles to practise in the glass. She smokes numbers of tiny thin cigarettes. The wife of a mandarin is by no means a recluse, and she often pays visits to the wives of other mandarins. But her principal pastime is cards, and it is no exaggeration to say that more than half her life is spent in games.

The numerous wives of the Emperor of Annam employ their time in much the same way. These all-powerful monarchs have always liked to surround themselves with a Court in which the feminine element predominates. Men writing on Annam have attributed hundreds of wives to the king. As a monarch has only right to three wives of the first-class rank, princesses of the second rank are numerous, for all the powerful mandarins wish to have one of their daughters in the royal harem. But it would be an error to count among the Imperial favourites the dancers, actresses, singers, and mimics who frequent the Court. The monarch is served by his wives on their knees.

An Annamese proverb says, "Where is the pimento that is not peppered? Where is the woman who is not jealous?" The competition and rivalry among the women of the harem is sometimes unbelievable. Many are the plots formed, the deceits and tricks practised within the Court. In this bevy of young women reputed to be the most beautiful in Annam, all the resources of intelligence and craft, all the artifices of attire, come into play. A certain woman is confident of her beauty and charm, for she has been chosen out from among her companions for months. Efforts, however, are not relaxed, the aim of every woman being to please the royal master, to please at any price.

In order to appear in Court ceremonies, costume is by no means left to chance. Ancient edicts regulate the colour of the silks and the richness of the brocades. There is room, all the same, for personal ingenuity.

When the toilet is finished, cards are brought out, or the more intelligent among them ask for the palace readers and listen enraptured to tales of adventure or love-stories. Cigarettes are smoked continually, while at the same time they drink tea and feast on cakes and sweetened ginger. The wives of the king arrange the flowers in the royal apartments and replenish the betel-box. The Imperial favourites are hardly ever seen outside the palace gates, or in public.

Before describing to me the general characteristics of beauty peculiar to this country, a mandarin was very careful to explain that "moral qualities and virtues are of far greater importance than physical beauty when it becomes a question of choosing a wife." These were his own words. "Besides," he added, "it is not the young man who has the most to say in the matter."

All the same, the poets and lovers of this country have evolved an ideal somewhat as follows:

The size of waist must not be conspicuous, for if it is too large or too small there will be a lack of harmony.

The blackest and the longest hair is the most beautiful.

The face should be a long oval, and must have complete regularity of feature. The Chinese prefer a round face. For masculine beauty the Annamese demand angular features and projecting cheek-bones. To quote, or rather paraphrase, a native poet, "The eyes of the beloved one are as brilliant as those of an eagle, her eyelashes with their beautiful fine curves

spring forth like a silkworm's. Her heel is as red as ink." This has become a popular proverb, perhaps one of the best known among the Annamese.

Mát-phung	Eye of an eagle.
May-tam	Eyelash of a silkworm.
Gót-son	Heel like red ink.

No great imagination is needed to gauge the beauty of a deep dominating glance, powerful as the eagle's; but Asiatics alone thoroughly appreciate the ideal curve of an eyelash! And what shall we say of the pink heel, the carmine heel, the little foot red-tinted by the light brush of a fairy! This admiration, so typically Annamese, is somewhat surprising to us. Such a point in æsthetics would have escaped a European, whereas to this whole race it is a characteristic of first-rate importance. This is the reason why the Annamese woman who can afford shoes goes barefoot, or wears so tiny a sandal that it only just covers the tips of her toes.

Can there possibly be any connection between this peculiar taste of the Annamese and that which has urged the Chinese to deform the feet of their women? But it is noteworthy that in China women are extremely particular as to the foot. It would be considered indelicate for the women of the Celestial Empire to show their feet, and artists always represent them as hidden beneath the dress. The Annamese do not possess this particular kind of modesty, and, as I said before, frankly admire the red heel.

The hand should be small, the fingers thin and long. A round and white wrist is essential.

The Annamese are critical, too, as to the voice—they admire soft and harmonious tones.

The walk and bearing of the Annamese woman is most graceful. From an early age she practises walking, head up, chest out, without stiffness or ostentation, and the arms swinging freely with a rhythmic motion.

The smiles which bring dimples into play are as attractive to these people as they are to us.

History and literature hand down to us the names of very few celebrated women. Among the most remarkable must be mentioned the heroine of Tonking, Queen Trúng-vuong, who, after delivering her country from Chinese oppression, reigned from 39 to 36 B.C. She was helped by her sister Trúng-nhi. When China again took possession of the country, the two Tonking heroines together put an end to their days by a glorious suicide.

In times of distress or famine, or during some great national calamity, women of the richer classes have often distinguished themselves. Some of the Dowager Empresses, whom the Annamese call "Queen-Mothers," have taken part in politics. For instance, the mother of the King Tu-Duc made a point of studying every edict before it was signed. On the stage and in poetry, women are often represented as exposing themselves to danger and undertaking warlike exploits in order to deliver or revenge their husbands.

There is very little crime among the women, much less than among the men. It seems, too, that there is less prostitution in Annam than in China. Chinese

women are never seen on the stage, the women's rôles being always taken by men. In Annam, however, women take an active part in performances, but nevertheless both actresses and dancers are looked upon as standing very low in the social scale, and are frankly despised.

Annamese women never smoke opium, and it is a curious fact that although the man who has acquired this habit is treated with indulgence, a woman would draw down upon herself the greatest opprobrium should she imitate him.

Infanticide is excessively rare, the natives from whom I asked information even considering that such a thing could not exist.

The women pay calls on each other, but never receive a visit from a man. Though they are not excluded from public ceremonies, they do not take a very prominent part in them.

Not even on her wedding-day, nor at any future time, was the wife permitted to eat at the same time as her husband. It is natural, therefore, that she should never take part with other men in any public meal. In the lower classes this severe etiquette had perforce to be relaxed, but only then in the face of necessity and circumstances.

Women are allowed to go to the theatre, for which they show the greatest enthusiasm; their seats, however, are always separated from those of the men.

A European visiting an Annamese mandarin is unable to ask him after his wives. Unless an intimate friend or relation, such a question is regarded as an insult.

In their confinements the women are nursed by midwives. A doctor would visit patients for other illnesses, but never for this. He does not do much more than feel the pulse, and even then he is careful to interpose a piece of his tunic between his fingers and the skin of his female patient. For an Annamese to call a French doctor into the bosom of his family shows a great sacrifice of prejudices, and is a proof of extreme confidence.

Thus we see that the Annamese woman seems to differ from Western women more in her manners and customs than in her social condition. Respect and filial piety are assured to her in her home and the law recognises her really extensive rights; when one remembers the mutilation sometimes inflicted on Chinese women, one realises how much better off the Annamese woman is than some of her neighbours in the extreme East.

The Annamese family, governed by such principles, should have a prosperous future before it.

If ancestor-worship has greatly contributed towards the solidity of family life and to the greatness of the nation, it has also tended to make them exaggerate tradition. This religion is not necessarily opposed to ideas of progress, as the Japanese have proved. If we wish to know the possibilities of the Annamese race and realise their moral worth, we have only to look at their home-life and the respectful treatment of their women.

CHAPTER IX

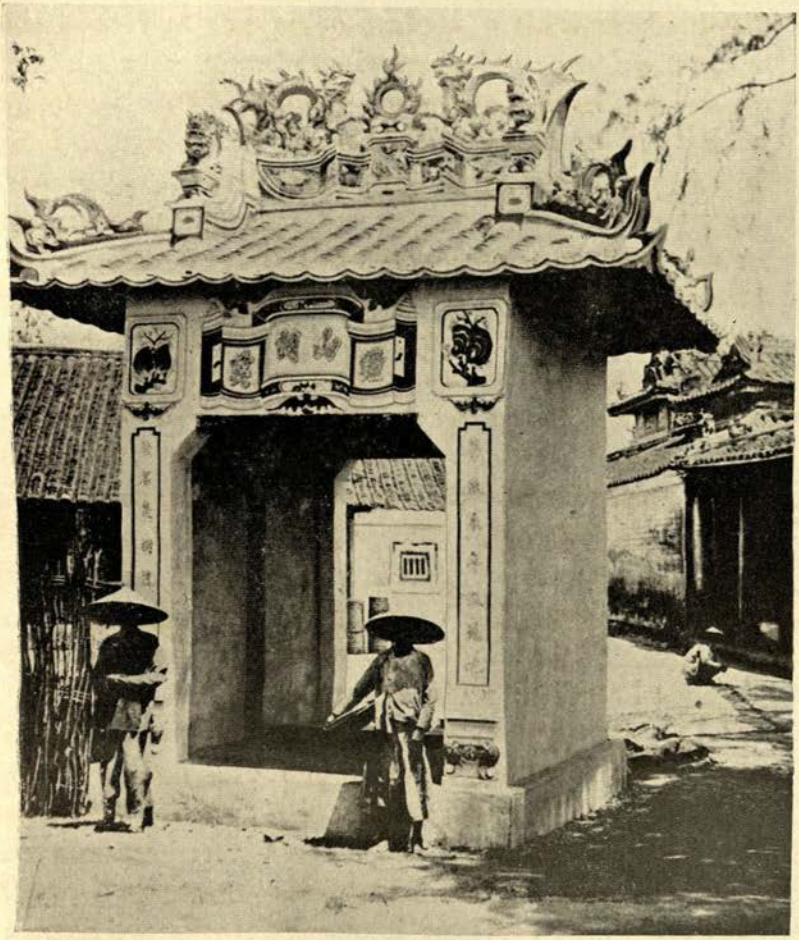
THE ANNAMESE COMMUNE AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANISATION OF THE STATE

The Annamese Commune : Its independence and its functions : Mayor and deputy mayors : Notables and the Municipal Council : The Public Hall, goods in common and their redistribution : The canton, the district, and the prefecture : The Ministers and the Comat : The Emperor

AMONG the social institutions of the Annamese, none is more worthy of note than the *Commune.* This is a collection of families, an association possessing a portion of the national soil, self-supporting, self-governing, and claiming the right to settle the proportionate amount of taxes due to the State.

It is called *Xâ* in Tonking, *Thôn* in Cochin-China, and consists of one or several hamlets (*làng*).

One commune takes its rise from another on account of a natural need of expansion. When the family increases, new clearings are made and put into cultivation. The new occupants receive their title-deeds from the mandarins of the Superior Administration, and are inscribed in the Government Survey Records under a new tribal name. Exempt from taxation for three years, they become possessors of the soil on payment of a sum proportionate to the number of



A HIGHLY ORNAMENTAL PAGODA DOOR

adult males and the cultivable value of the soil. They choose one of their number as a representative, whose duty it is to transact communal business with the Government. He is more a delegate than a chief. He is called *Ly-trưởng* (the mayor). He is assisted by *Phó-ly* (deputy mayors). The mayor is not, as elsewhere, the most important municipal councillor As it is his duty to serve as intermediary between the commune and the different functionaries of the province, both native and European, his patience and diplomatic skill are put to the severest test. He will have many disagreeable duties to perform during his long year's term of office. His may be an unenviable lot indeed, judging from the case of a worthy mayor in the neighbourhood of Nhatrang, whose fate was a prison. I saw him from time to time on my visits to the sick in prison. In spite of his wooden collar, he retained a dignified manner and appearance which quickly distinguished him from the criminals who surrounded him. His story was simple enough. One evening, a European in search of salt had anchored his boat close to the village. The native sailors landed and wanted to carry off young village girls and take them on board. A fierce quarrel arose, accompanied by great noise and disturbance, and the villagers hastened to the help of the young girls. The tumult became general, the owner of the boat, the European, who had himself taken no small share in the struggle, was seized, gagged, and bound. The weaker sex had found brave defenders, but to the detriment of "European prestige." The punishment for this offence was visited on the poor mayor, who,

needless to relate, profited by an exemption from hard labour every time he asked me for it.

The Annamese Commune is, says Luro, "a moral being in the full enjoyment of civil rights, having the power of purchase, sale, and free access to justice." Nevertheless a royal ordinance from Gia-long forbade the sale of goods held in common and only allowed the disposal of the usufruct. The Commune managed its home affairs as it chose, distributed the revenue, levied taxes, dispensed justice, and secured order, undertook useful public works with no interference from a higher authority. When once the ordinary taxation has been settled with the State, the whole payment must be made, but no discussion as to the means of raising it is permissible. According to the importance of the Commune there must be officers responsible for the preservation of order, finance, public works, &c. There must therefore be police, accountants, land-surveyors, &c. But the real authority is vested in the "notables" forming together with the old men the Municipal Council. The notables (elder brothers) are the mandarins, the literary class, the soldiers, the ex-mayors, and, of course, the mayor and his assistants. They are distinguished from ordinary citizens (younger brothers), being exempt from all statute labours.

The Municipal Council meets in the Common Hall (*Dinh*), which according to circumstances serves as a temple, market, or theatre. It is made as a rule of bamboo and straw, but some proclaim the power and wealth of the inhabitants by the large size of the building, the tiled roof surmounted by dragons, and

A SHELTERED CORNER OF THE BAY

massive pillars of costly wood. The communal officials are all elected by their fellow-citizens. The mayor is invested in office by the high provincial mandarins, and by the French Government, and he receives a diploma and seal which is also that of the Commune. His duties are merely honorary. Sometimes the revenue from a rice-field is allotted to him for secretarial expenses, whence the name "rice-field of the pencil."

The Commune in fact possesses goods—such as meadows, forests and rice-fields. It distributes them every three or six years according to the regulations, which, though clearly defined by law and custom, are none the less fully discussed in practice. Portions of land are never drawn by lot but given by selection. The old men are given first choice, then the notables, and last of all the ordinary citizens according to the order of inscription on the rolls. Needless to say injustices easily arise. Communal property, however, is so constituted that it assures a safe refuge for old men and for the disinherited. Every citizen possesses the minimum of land to ensure a livelihood. When a spendthrift or a gambler has squandered his fortune, there always remain to him a few acres which are inalienable. Thus begging becomes impossible. In fact, beggars are never seen on the roads of Annam. The village makes provision for every one, even lepers and incurables.

The Empire of Annam has always maintained an army. Recruits are raised by means of one conscript to every six adults. As it was the prerogative of the "notables" to name the candidates, the children of

their neighbours did not fail to be chosen before their own. The soldier, being but poorly remunerated by the State, remains dependent on his village, which grants him an allotment of the common rice-fields. The profession of arms has become more and more unpopular. What sight could be more pathetic than those unfortunate *nhaqué** taken to the infirmary for the medical examination. They looked more like victims going to execution than future warriors proud of serving their country. Home-sickness came over them almost before they had taken leave of their rice-field and their buffaloes, for in many cases it was their first exile. Now they stand bewildered between a corporal on the one hand, who yells at them in Annamese, and a doctor on the other, who speaks more gently but in an unknown tongue. Those unfit for service could not contain their joy on learning their near return to their homes; they were new men. The others look at the doctor with eyes so full of entreaty that it overwhelms him with compassion. But when they have worn the khaki uniform and the flat cap for a few months, their fear will depart, and, if not too badly treated or beaten, they will become excellent *linh*,† and will soon lose all dislike of their profession.

Public appointments are in as great request in Annam as in other countries—less, it is said, for the honour attached to them than for the material advantages derived from them. However, the Annamese Commune may be taken as a model by many nations—a splendid little republic, falling not far short of the ideal conception of philosophers.

* *Nhaqué* = peasants.

† *Linh* = Annamese soldier.

The union of a certain number of Communes—generally ten in number—constitutes a canton (*tong*). At its head are the chief of the canton and under-chiefs elected by the delegates of the Communes, and nominated by the French Government and the high provincial mandarins. After a period of six years the canton chief may bear the title of "chief functionary of the canton, ninth degree, second class." He is the intermediary between the central power and the various Communes he represents. Several cantons constitute a district (*huyên*), and two or three huyêns a prefecture (*phủ*) governed by the chiefs of the district (*quan huyên*), and of those of the prefecture (*quan phủ*). The quan huyên is entrusted with the administration, as well as with judicial authority over minor offences. He is an important official, for all civil and criminal matters are first brought before his tribunal. The phủ exercises authority over one or several huyên deprived of any nominal head. He is an official who could easily be dispensed with. The sentence he pronounces, as in the case of the huyên, can only be carried into execution after receiving the approval of the provincial authorities. The chiefs of the districts and of the prefectures are chosen from among the mandarins or from among the literary classes.

The province (*tinh*) is the largest of the territorial divisions of Annam. At its head is a governor (*tông dôc*), or simply a *quan bô*, head of the executive administration, assisted by a *quan án*, head of the judicial administration, and a *lanh binh* for military purposes. The lanh binh has had no effective authority since the French occupation. Indeed, the "Militia,"

a kind of local police, is under the orders of "inspectors," all Europeans, whereas the native regiments are commanded by officers of the colonial army.

It may be remembered that at the head of the province, the French Government is represented by a "Resident." In the capital of the province, besides the Resident, may be found recorders, tax-collectors, clerks; the doctor, heads of the postal and telegraph service, officers of the militia, inspector of customs and excise, engineer of public works, &c. In the chief towns of the district, and of the prefecture, native teachers are busily occupied in the supervision of the government schools. No hamlet is without its school. The Annamese are very anxious to improve themselves. Moreover, public appointments are open to all classes of society, and can be obtained in open competition.

There is no national representation in Annam. The Commune, so powerful in itself, appoints its chiefs of the canton, it is true, but these pass into the pay of the provinces, and owe their promotion to the State alone. Between the Emperor and the people there are only the mandarins. Otherwise no aristocracy exists. Titles of nobility are sometimes granted for some brilliant action or distinguished service, but these are no longer hereditary. As in each generation the degree of nobility is lowered, the privileges conferred are of very short duration. The Emperor is at the same time supreme head in religion, supreme judge, and chief of all civil and military powers. He is the only being who has the right to offer sacrifices to Heaven

PRISONERS AT WORK ON A STONE DIKE

and to Earth. He must be addressed by his people on their knees, and no one may look at him. At one time the Emperor only left his palace for purposes of ceremonial ritual, and heralds went before to announce his coming, so that the inhabitants might go home and shut their doors.

It is needless to add that these practices have for many years fallen into disuse. It would be difficult to bring them into harmony with the present government of Annam, which is a Protectorate.

The monarch bears the title of *Koàng dê* (emperor), but he is usually called *vua* (king). It is also the title he employed in his relations as vassal to China.

Next to him in authority come the "four pillars of the Empire"—that is to say, the high chancellors; and the six Ministers of State—*i.e.*, of Home Affairs, Finance, Rites and Ceremonies, War, Justice, and Public Affairs.

CHAPTER X

THE TÊT

Preparations for the Têt : Gambling propensities of the Annamese : *Baquan* : Festivities during the Têt : Sports on water and land : Procession of the Dragon : A theatrical performance : A curious play : An enthusiastic audience

THE Têt is the greatest fête in the calendar; it is the Annamese New Year. It takes place during the new moon in February, and extends over a period of ten days. There is not a single native in Annam who does not celebrate this event; however rich or however poor he may be, he will manage to break his daily routine and take part in some sort of merry-making.

The preparations for this occasion are manifold, but chiefly of a religious character. All the graves must be tended, the dwellings thoroughly cleansed, especially around the altar, and the red papers with black characters which adorn the inside and outside of the house must be renewed. Money is imperatively necessary. At this season, therefore, the Annamese collect any outstanding debts, drive hard bargains, or even steal, if the offence can be committed without detection. Every sapek is of value. All the savings of the last few months, or maybe those stored up since

the last Têt, are now expended—some on gifts for the altar, some on new tunics and turbans, a certain amount on squibs and crackers, and all that remains on gambling. On the last day of the Têt the whole family will be penniless. Indeed they will be fortunate if they have not to hand over the clothes on their backs, their newly purchased tunics, to pay their gambling debts. Gambling is the greatest defect of the Annamese character; they seldom drink, nor are they quarrelsome or violent, but their love of this vice is inherent in their natures. It is this which prevents thrift and results in a hand-to-mouth existence, even among the regular and skilled workers. The Têt festivities tempt those who do not habitually gamble to give themselves up to it. And the unfortunate part about it is that the Chinese outsiders reap the benefit of this deplorable habit; they are cool-headed and always manage to empty the pockets of the more excitable Annamese. In these few days the Chinese often make a greater profit than during all the rest of the year. They always trade on the native weakness, for though public and private gambling is prohibited by the French except during the Têt, the Chinese by setting up gambling booths encourage the Annamese to evade the law. In other dealings also they show the same money-making propensities. It is the Chinese, and never the Annamese, who are the shopkeepers of Annam, and who make it their business to cater for the needs of Europeans. They lend money at usurious interest, and have a hundred little tricks for extorting any hard-earned cash that the happy-go-lucky Annamese may happen to have.

Whenever a peasant has cut and brought in his paddy he is invariably visited by his Chinese neighbour, who sits and chats and accepts the drinks so hospitably offered him. He is careful, however, to keep his own thirst within bounds, and finally proposes a game. Towards dawn, when the visitor takes his departure, the poor peasant has probably lost every grain of his harvest.

The most common form of gambling is *baquan*. This game is played on a camp bed, or even on the bare earth. A square divided into four compartments, marked one, two, three, and four, is drawn in the dust, and the players stake so many cents or sapeks on one of them. The banker takes a handful of sapeks from a bowl and throws them on the ground. He then withdraws them again four by four. The number left on the ground at the end naturally corresponds to one of the numbers in the square. The lucky individual who has staked his sapeks in that compartment sees them quadrupled; the other stakes are pocketed by the banker.

The best regulated European household is devoid of servants during the Têt, for no member must be absent from the great family gathering at the festival, nor will he miss, when that duty is accomplished, any of the fun and merrymaking which follow. A friend of mine was painting a poor Annamese cripple who used to beg on the roadside not far from her house. She gave him twenty cents a day, a sum which was wealth for him. She fed him, moreover, whenever he came, and good meat had probably never passed his lips before. The first day of the Têt he did not

appear, and she sent her boy to the miserable hovel where he lived to ask after him. His answer came back that as it was the Têt he could not sit, but that as soon as it was over he would return. He evidently considered that during such an important season his liberty was of greater value than the shelter, food, and payment of his benefactress.

The Têt ceremonies are not only of a domestic character. In towns all sorts of games, sports, races, &c., are organised, but in a village like Nhatrang they are naturally on a small scale. Owing to the close proximity of sea and river the greater part of the sports takes place on the water, and we witnessed many an amusing event. Some of the races between fishing sampans were very pretty; their huge sails of cocoa-palm fibre were all outspread as they swiftly bore their cockle-shell of a boat towards the shore. But these races were of too quiet a nature to arouse much enthusiasm in the onlookers; the following events revealed the excitement and hilarity of which the placid Annamese is capable. One was a fight between a number of men, all of whom were sitting or standing in little round bamboo-plaited basket-boats placed at a certain distance from each other.

These baskets were held steady on the water while the combatants scrambled into them and found their balance. Each was then given one oar to manœuvre his craft. When the signal to start was given, the friends of each competitor released the boat. No sooner had they done so than many of the baskets turned turtle and their owners vanished silently below

the water. A burst of laughter came from the shore. Many others, as soon as they began to use their oars, followed suit. At each fresh disappearance there were shrieks of uproarious laughter; he who made the most frantic efforts to recover his balance, and therefore went under with the greatest splash, caused most mirth. When two men got close enough to attack each other, it was always the one who stood on the defensive who remained master of the situation, for the act of raising and swinging his oar always upset his opponent. A man would see his enemy vanish before he attempted to parry a stroke or had his boat touched. The last struggles and contortions to regain equilibrium when they felt themselves going were sometimes most ludicrous. In the end the water was strewn with overturned baskets, their owners having forsaken them to swim ashore after their involuntary dive. Naturally the man who remained last on the surface was he who gained the prize.

Another race in which sampans were rowed by sets of ten men showed us some magnificent types of natives. The rowers were chosen entirely for their strength, and they were all, without exception, big and brawny, quite unlike the light wiry build of the ordinary Annamese. We had had no idea before that day that the province could produce such men. An unreserved burst of excitement greeted each boat as it arrived at the finish, but changed into a real tumult when the umpires confessed they did not know to whom to award the first prize. The sampans all resembled each other, being of the same size, and having no distinctive marks. Like all sampans in

DANCING

A SAMPAN RACE

Indo-China, they were tarred black and had an eye whitewashed on either side of the stern—a certain charm against the dangers of the deep. The rowers themselves looked alike, as they were all naked to the waist. Directly the crowd perceived the hesitation amongst the judges, opinions and advice were shrieked from all sides; the difficulties were increased by some of the boats having passed inside instead of outside the posts, and being thus disqualified; each crew naturally denied this, and claimed that they were first, or at least second.

After this there were swimming races and diving and wrestling matches; but it was as much the aspect of the onlookers as the feats of the competitors which interested me. Till I witnessed the first Têt, I had never seen an Annamese smile frankly, much less laugh outright, and I certainly never believed him capable of such enthusiasm. It is true that the children who made up half the crowd were chiefly responsible for the excitement, but over and over again their elders heartily joined in.

In the afternoon Europeans and natives assembled near the village on an open space which had been surrounded by a palisade. The native school had been arranged as a pavilion for the Europeans, and this building was the starting-place and finish for the races. Nhatrang itself boasts only about thirty Europeans, but on this occasion many had come from the surrounding country, and the assembly was quite a large one. There were Custom-house officers from isolated salt-fields and from small islands off the coast, men from lonely lighthouses, railway superintendents on the

projected line from the middle of the tropical jungle, and colonists who owned plantations or were timber-cutting in the interior. Men, and even women, appeared from regions we thought entirely uninhabited. We, who considered ourselves isolated and far from the comforts and distractions of civilisation at Nhatrang, began to realise what real isolation meant. Some of these people had been months without seeing their nearest neighbour, so difficult were the means of access; and they were sometimes a long distance even from an Annamese hamlet. A visit to Nhatrang would never be made except to see a doctor, or for a rare festivity such as the present. Their timidity alone made it clear what a lonely life they led. Many of these men were married, and their wives had either braved the sea in a sampan, or the jungle in a palanquin, perhaps even a night in a native hut, for the sake of a little society. Their difficulties were not always ended on their arrival, as Nhatrang boasts of no suitable hotel or inn, and the rooms that a Chinese lets out are not all that could be desired in the way of cleanliness. They were not difficult to please, however, for to them our little village was a centre of civilisation.

The races on land were as varied and numerous as those on the water; there were races on horseback, on foot, with rickshaws, with live frogs on native wheelbarrows, &c. &c. The horse-race was the most amusing; the Annamese always experience great difficulty in sticking on their ponies, though their animals are generally so small and ill-fed that one would think them incapable of offering much resistance. Very

few of the competitors, it is true, had saddles, and many not more than a piece of old rope as bridle. The ponies were excited at their own numbers, and in consequence the Annamese found it harder than usual to mount and keep their seats. Many were thrown soon after starting, but others kept on manfully, catching hold of the mane or clasping their steed round the neck and righting themselves after slipping nearly to the ground. Those who did get safely to the goal, their bare legs swinging up and down with the gallop of the pony, fully deserved prizes.

One of the items on the programme was rather gruesome. The children were made to squat in front of the pavilion and compete for prizes to be given to those who made the worst grimaces. The Annamese are by no means a good-looking race, but the children, with their round faces, dark eyes and serious expression, are sometimes almost pretty. Happily it needs the incentive of a reward for them to make themselves as hideous as they were on that occasion. There were naturally differences of opinion as to the ugliest grimaces, and the competition had to be repeated again and again.

The great feature of the afternoon's festivities was the arrival of the native Governor's elephant, a magnificent beast with huge tusks. He was led in front of the pavilion, and there performed *lais* to us. The Annamese cornac, looking like a little monkey on his neck, tapped him on the head when he was in position, and forthwith the elephant bent his fore-legs till he was on his knees. Then, curling up his trunk, he lowered his head and touched the ground

several times, making a very good imitation of the Annamese *lai*.

In the evening there was a reception for Europeans at the Residence. From the verandah of the house we witnessed the great procession of the Dragon, the culminating ceremony of the Têt, and one which is never absent from any important Annamese or Chinese fête. It is a very effective spectacle. The enormous, brightly coloured head is rather startling in the daytime, but at night, when lighted up by torches inside it, and when flames literally spout out from its mouth and nostrils, it is truly weird and terrifying. The man who carries it is so well hidden that even his feet are indistinguishable; he is always well versed in the traditional movements, and the dragon tosses his head up and down and from side to side as he walks along. The body is borne by a number of men, who walk inside it, a yard or two apart; they are of unequal height, so that the curves of the scaly back are most realistic. The torches in their hands bring out well the designs and colours painted on the transparent skin. The dragon I saw was about forty yards long, but they are sometimes even longer.

As he wound round the twisting paths of the Residence garden, the illumination from his body lighting up the crowds who surrounded him, one felt oneself back in the mythical ages. The weird effect was augmented by the squibs and crackers which were let off in front of him; he never faltered, however, and was sometimes walking through a very tempest of fiery darts. Plenty of accidents from burning and scorching occur on such occasions, but this does not

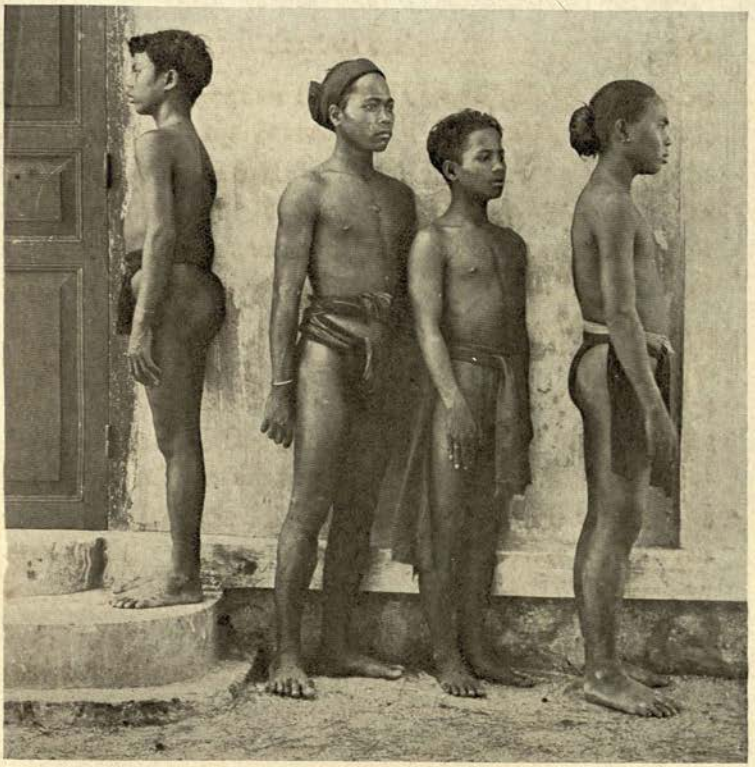
hinder the eagerness of the natives to take part in the procession. Many instruments of music, if drums, gongs, and Chinese violins can be so called, accompanied the dragon. Their discordant notes made the scene even more unearthly. The children were fascinated as well as frightened by the dragon, and ran across his path the whole time, uttering excited shrieks.

When the procession had disappeared, to make the tour of the village, there followed a display of fireworks made by a native of the province. They were not bad ; at any rate the Annamese approved of them, and every manifestation of delight was heard whenever the rockets sent down their showers of many-coloured stars.

The evening ended up with a theatrical performance. These generally take place in some large pagoda. On this occasion we had only to keep our seats on the verandah, however, for instead of our going to the theatre, the theatre came to us. Now that the dragon had taken its departure, the garden was in total darkness. The darkness of a night without stars in the Tropics is incomparably greater than the darkness of a starless night in Europe, and I feared we should see very little of the acting. But we were to have footlights, and those of a very novel kind. A number of men provided with torches were told to squat down in a ring. When they had placed themselves in position, they were also provided with saucers full of petroleum for the purpose of improving the light of the torches, which at first gave forth more smoke than flame. Without hesitation each man lifted his saucer to his

lips, and having taken a mouthful of this obnoxious liquid, squirted it adroitly on to the lighted end of the torch. We were a little astonished at such a proceeding, but the men themselves seemed too intent on the play to find it either dangerous or disagreeable. When the actors stepped into the magic circle, we were able to see them fairly well, and every now and then, as the torches flared up high, we had a glimpse not only of the stage but of the crowded audience. Anxious little faces of children who had sidled in between the petroleum spitters came into view; I do not know where they had tucked their little bodies, but only their round faces with wide-open eyes were distinguishable. Behind them, as each jet of flame shot up, a compact mass of black knobs of hair was visible, men and women, all with eyes bent on the spectacle in front of them. The fitful glare, as well as the black acrid smoke blowing now and then in our faces, did not recommend this mode of illumination, but it seemed in keeping with the weird and curious scene we were witnessing.

The Annamese drama consists of tragedies, comedies, and pantomimic farces, and it was a pantomime that we had the pleasure of watching. Pieces in general last three days and nights, the actors only stopping for their meals. Nevertheless the Annamese are such enthusiastic playgoers that a good audience is never wanting. I cannot tell whether we saw the beginning, middle, or end of a piece, but at any rate I found it most entertaining. As the tom-toms and drums began to beat, the actors made their appearance; they represented first of all a tiger, a cock, and a man.



TYPES OF MOI MEN

ANNAMESE ACTORS

The acting seemed to consist of making the queerest contortions imaginable with faces, hands, and feet. They would stand on one foot, with the other in the air, spreading out their toes and at the same time contorting fingers, hands, arms, and bodies to impossible angles. In this position they would stare at somebody with such intensity that their eyes would become bloodshot. After a few seconds, or even minutes, they would suddenly give a blood-curdling shriek and go whirling and twisting in fantastic antics round the wee circle which constituted the stage. Sometimes the man would hunt for the tiger, and as he turned and craned his neck from side to side, the tiger, rolling himself into a veritable ball, would revolve at his heels. He kept so close to his pursuer that the two seemed to be one, yet his movements were so supple and agile that for a long time he never actually touched him. When they finally came into contact a fight would ensue, but in the struggle a mass of arms and legs was all that could be distinguished. There was great excitement at these moments; the children shrieked, their elders laughed, only the mandarins kept a dignified silence. Every now and then little boys, dressed in various costumes and carrying flags, walked among the principal actors, giving a series of little cries and grunts. Later the cock and tiger disappeared and a woman and child came in. They, like the man, had their faces whitened, dark eyebrows were painted on their foreheads, and red angular marks on their cheeks. All wore high, gaudy head-dresses. There seemed to be some semblance of conversation after the appearance of the actresses, but the screams and strange gestures

continued at intervals. Sometimes there were long pauses in which the players remained absolutely still, not the fluttering of an eyelid, nor the slightest breathing movement, could be detected, in fact they displayed a lifelessness of which Europeans would probably be incapable. Strange to say, it was the contortions which caused most enthusiasm amongst the squatting spectators, the least human calling forth the greatest admiration.

Applause is not manifested, as with us, by clapping. A gong is placed near the actors, and every time a spectator sees anything he thinks worthy of praise, he gets up, goes to the gong and strikes it. Needless to say, the gong was sounded almost incessantly, and after an antic worse than the ordinary the noise was deafening. We, on the verandah, were given little pieces of shaped wood, such as are used for good marks in the Annamese schools, and were told to throw them to the actors who acquitted themselves best. They were, as a matter of fact, however, always picked up by one of the audience, the actors themselves not deigning to notice these signs of our approval which fell at their feet.

At midnight, when we left to go home, the play was still in full swing, and both audience and actors were as ardent as ever. Perhaps the voices were a little hoarse, but certainly there was no flagging in the wild whirlings or the disfiguring contortions of hands and feet. Long into the night we heard their shrill screams and cries, intermingled with the sound of gongs and drums and the crackling of squibs and crackers. Only

towards dawn did the village relapse into its habitual quiet, broken only by the beating of the waves on the shore. Even then peace did not reign long, for, very early in the morning, the splendours and pomps of the Têt began again.

CHAPTER XI

OUR GARDEN

Laying out and planning a garden in the Tropics : Our coolie gardener : Tropical shrubs, bougainvilleas, filaos, agaves : Tropical fruits : Cultivation of European garden flowers : Enemies—lizards, crabs, birds, ants

WHEN we arrived at Nhatrang, the enclosure round the house, known as "the garden," was as sandy and dry as the beach itself. Our first care was to buy good earth from a village situated on the banks of the river, and when the sampans had brought us a plentiful supply, we made out a plan with prettily shaped beds and curving paths. But it was easier to make the plan than to carry it into execution. The coolie we engaged as gardener had never worked in a European's garden before, and his knowledge of agriculture was limited to the rice-field. It was on this model that he made our beds—instead of letting the earth slope gently down towards the edges he persisted in keeping it at the same level with beaten banks of hardened mud all round. There were certainly advantages in this arrangement, for in summer the water was retained longer, and in winter the earth was prevented from being swept away by the heavy rains. Luckily we soon discovered a little red leafy plant which fell over

and completely hid the sun-baked banks. Then, too, we were so glad to get our beds in the right places that we offered no objections to the coolie's methods, for as soon as our heads were turned he made beds where we intended to have paths, and paths where beds had been carefully marked out.

He could not understand a word of French, so that all my orders given to him by signs and without explanation seemed to him a little mad. The use of manure astonished him, for the Annamese do not trouble to improve the earth of their rice-fields. He evidently thought a winding instead of a straight path absurd, and to him curves were neither practical nor beautiful. However, he always set to work with a placid countenance.

In Europe there is little discomfort and much pleasure in superintending the work of a garden, but here with a blinding sun in one's eyes and a furnace heat on one's back the case is very different. But the reward is greater too, for the delicate verdure and rich colours make a garden here an oasis in the midst of a desert, whereas in England the surrounding fields and wayside hedges prevent such a striking contrast. Two years have gone by since our first arrival in Nhatrang, and now as I write, what was once a sandy waste has been changed into a glory of colour with patches of green grass here and there. The roller, mower, and shears were implements that had never been seen in the neighbourhood, and our coolie was rather taken aback at having to tend ordinary grass. When smooth little green lawns, however, made their appearance, even he began to appreciate his task;

they reminded him perhaps of the early green shoots of rice.

The four "Flames of the Forest" (*Cæsalpinia pulcherrima*) at the end of the garden are in bloom, and the masses of brilliant red flowers make a wonderful show. The coffee-trees nearer the house are wafting in their delicious scent through the open doors. The pure white, but rather artificial-looking flower of this tree never lasts more than two days at a time, but to make up for the shortness of its life it blossoms on an average once or twice a month and then it is covered with a mass of blooms like flakes of snow. These trees always flower quite suddenly, no sign of buds is visible one evening, yet the next morning we wake up to find their perfume filling the room.

In one corner of the garden is a group of Filaos (*Casuarina equisetifolia*), a tree that has been imported from Turkey. These tropical pines have been planted by some past Resident all over the village and add greatly to its charm. In a garden they are not altogether desirable, as the thousands of dry needles which continually fall from them prevent plants from thriving beneath. We eventually found a sort of purple periwinkle which will grow there—a flower which, at certain seasons, makes purple patches all over the beach. The only other tall trees besides the Filaos and the silver-leaved Grevilleas are three Ceara (*Manihot Glaziovii*) india-rubber trees and several Japan Lilacs. The flower of the latter is a mixture of white and pale violet, and has a suave and penetrating perfume. Its blossoms are less conspicuous than those of European lilacs, but its foliage is more

abundant and of a more delicate green. We have taken advantage of the very real shade obtained by these trees to cultivate underneath them young canes, arborescent ferns and other jungle plants. From their branches hang boxes of orchids. Cycas also, which require shade if they are to thrive well, spread out their long finely cut leaves here and there. These Cycas are the most attractive evergreen plants of the Tropics. In Annam I have seen one thirty feet high and at first mistook it for a cocoa-palm, but as a rule one does not see them above four feet. New shoots spring forth from the trunk every six months or so, and as the old leaves die the growth of the new ones is extremely rapid. We have often noticed a difference with the naked eye between dawn and sunset.

Many of these bigger trees we found apparently dead on our arrival, and it was only after the axe had been laid to their roots that we discovered that they were still alive; only a little water was needed to revive them. There were Agaves too, but they took up so much room in front of the house that we wanted to destroy them. To transplant them to the back was impossible; their stiff powerful leaves, with thorns as sharp as a sword-point, stretched out in all directions and defied approach. We were told, however, that they would soon flower, and as this happens but once in their lifetime we decided to let them remain. Sure enough some months later a stem pushed its way up from the middle of the plant. In a few weeks it was about five metres high and thirty centimetres in diameter at its base. When it had attained full growth a small

whitish flower burst forth at the extreme top, most inconspicuous, and neither beautiful in colour nor form—a disappointing result of so many years of preparation! But it had accomplished its destiny and proceeded to die; however, it took so long about it that at length I lost patience, and one day five natives and a bullock dragged them all up by the roots and they were seen no more. Some smaller ones which were not so bulky were transplanted to the farther end of the garden, for the blue tint of the leaves made a pleasant contrast with the different shades of green. Some people use these agaves as a garden fence or hedge, and they certainly make a more effectual one than even the prickly cactus.

But it is the flowering shrubs which give colour to the garden, the Hibiscus, scarlet, pink, and pale mauve, the blood-red blossoms of the Pomegranate trees, the red and yellow Acacias which so often surround the Annamese pagodas, and the Bougainvilleas. These last, when kept watered, will flower all the year round. The rich tone of their deep purple blossoms is far finer than the pale little flowers seen in the conservatories in England. Two growing on either side of the garden gate will soon join in an arch over it; already the purple cuts against the blue sheet of sky and sea, making a dazzling contrast. All these shrubs are from three to six feet high, for they have grown to twice their size since I bought them from natives and planted them. Once a woman brought me a sweet-smelling frangipanier (*Plumeria alba*) which seemed to be in good condition with plenty of earth all round the root. However, before paying her I made her put down her basket and gave a tug at the plant. It

immediately came out of the earth—my pretty little shrub was made up of cut branches carefully arranged. Later on another woman offered me a beautiful little rose-tree, I looked at the roots, paid her and let her go. The next day our neighbour told me that he had had a rose-tree stolen from his verandah! We have now more than a dozen rose-trees, and no morning goes by, winter or summer, without my being able to cut a dozen blooms for the house. There are big pink ones with a delicious scent, and small scarlet ones without any odour, both indigenous to Annam. All our efforts to grow the European varieties of the Langbian were unavailing. I must not forget to mention, too, the cocaine shrubs with their bright green leaves, minute white flowers, and scarlet seed-pods, nor the mimosas, with their little yellow balls, whose perfume on a moonlit night has often been a delight to us.

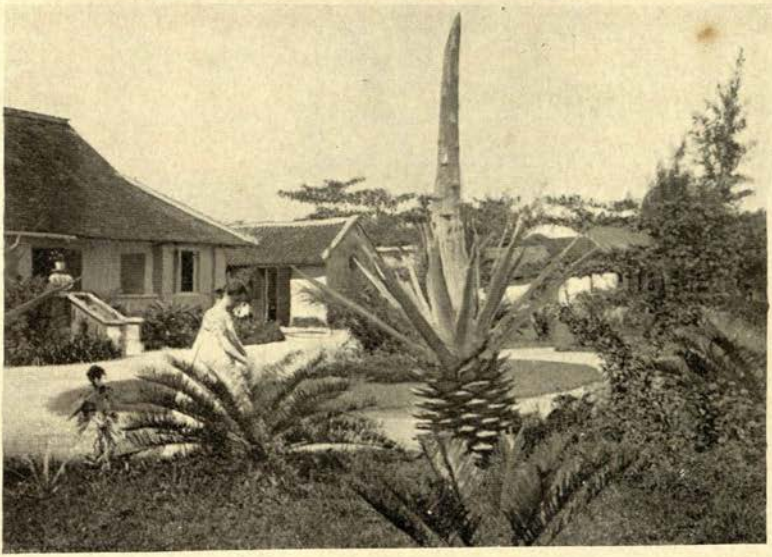
But our garden is not limited to flowering shrubs; we have many tropical fruit-trees scattered here and there. Banana-trees, with their strong, broad leaves of a tender green and their heavy bunches of fruit, papaya-trees (*Carica papaya*), whose curiously growing fruit, apparently stuck on to the trunk itself, looks as if it would fall to the ground every moment. This fruit is supposed to be easily digested, and is taken by some Europeans before nearly every meal. We have also eaten custard apples from our own tree (*Anona squamosa*); they are hard to find, for they are exactly the same shade as the leaves. The custard apples of Annam have a much more delicate flavour than those of India or Burmah; they are neither so sweet nor so

coarse. There are also orange- and lemon-trees, pine-apple plants, and the ornamental grass-like leaved balm-mint (*Cymbopogon schananthus*, Citronelle). The leaves of the balm-mint are often infused here to make an after-dinner drink for people who do not care for tea or coffee.

Every six months we used to receive fresh seeds from Paris or London. Those that come up at all thrive better than in their native country; we have had balsams like small roses, and dahlias five feet high. Our nasturtiums, cannas, Indian and Chinese carnations (the scented ones will not flower), zinnias, chrysanthemums, and petunias are really beautiful to behold. Every winter for a month or six weeks I have had, too, about a dozen violets every day. All these flowers have to be watered twice a day, but as our coolie is always anxious to have the most beautiful flowers in Nhatrang, he actually waters even when he is not being watched! Many beds are bordered with Amaryllides (*Imantophyllum*), which are very much like Florence lilies, except that they do not have absolutely upright stems.

The growth of both bulbs and seeds is extremely rapid. For instance, we once ate mustard and cress five and four days respectively after it had been sown. These little delicate shoots sometimes heave up a cake of earth half an inch thick, if they have been unable to pierce it, so full of life and vigour are they in this climate. Seeds have to be sown in cases perched on four legs in tins of vinegar, or they are devoured by ants. Ants are the great enemies of gardeners here; some flowers one cannot pick without being stung by

OUR PET DEER BEGGING FOR BANANAS



AN AGAVE SPRINGING UP

them. Little white, almost transparent crabs, too, with protruding black eyes, occasionally scratch up plants here and there. They come up from the beach, but the garden is a dangerous hunting-ground for them, for though they move quickly, they cannot escape, if they have once attracted the blue eyes of our Siamese cat. Lizards make their home in one of our beds from time to time. The sandy coast of South Annam is swarming with these many-spotted, rainbow-tinted creatures. As one drives along, those on the road raise themselves on their front paws, and gaze in our direction till we are only a few yards away, then they scuttle over the sand and pop into their holes. They are most amusing to watch when we are motoring, for, unused to the vibration and noise, they evidently do not realise what is going to happen. We rush upon them so quickly that it seems they will be squashed under the wheels while they are still listening and searching for the danger. But they always escape in the nick of time, disappearing like a flash of lightning. The Annamese catch them for food. They trap them with bamboo rings, which they place over the holes; by the same process our garden was kept fairly free from them. The domestic lizard, the curious little animal which runs over the ceilings and the walls of all houses in the Tropics, we never tried to destroy. They are supposed to eat mosquitoes and spiders, and at any rate I can vouch for the moths and ephemera which come buzzing round the lamps in the evening. The small insects they snap up and swallow whole, the larger ones they seize, and by a dexterous movement detach the wings,

which fall to the ground before the struggling fly goes down their throats. The uninitiated is in constant dread of these lizards falling on him, but it is very rarely that they lose their hold. They are grey, and much smaller than the Tokai of pagodas or the sand-lizards.

There were some birds which during a month or two nearly drove me wild. A number of them used to come regularly at the same hour every morning, fly direct on my beds of cannas, and settling at the tops of the long straight stalks pick at the round calyx till the blossom, losing its base, fell to the ground.

A bed with thirty or forty yellow blossoms would reveal itself in the early morning in all its splendour, but by the time I had finished dressing sometimes not a single one was left. These "birds with Annamese hats," as we used to call them, because of a little tuft of feathers on their heads, looked so perky and pleased when they had completed their work that they made me much more indignant than if it had been ordinary smooth-headed sparrows or blackbirds. First of all I tried shooting them, but besides the awkward hour (I was generally in my bath when they first made their appearance) I so riddled the big green leaves with shot that I did more damage to the beds than the birds themselves. Then I made a scarecrow with hat, arms, and legs, but after the first day it did not frighten them at all. Then I had a big pole stuck in the midst of the bed, with a Swiss cow-bell on the top. I tied a string to the bell, and every time a bird approached my precious flowers I pulled it. After a day or two I got tired of that, as being continually on the look-out to

pull the string I could never read or write in peace, so I tied my end of the string to the kitchen table. The boys were then responsible for my flowers. They seemed rather to enjoy the job, for they displayed a good deal of energy over it. Often when the bell rang more violently than usual, I used to dash out of my chair, thinking I was at school again and late for prayers or a lesson, but it was the choice of the lesser evil, and I preferred that to the loss of my flowers.

Our homing pigeons and peacocks occasionally devastated our kitchen garden, but we naturally preferred a little destruction to being without them. They made our meals amusing by their disputes with the Siamese cats for every morsel of food we threw from the table.

However, in spite of such drawbacks, the garden flourishes. It is difficult to picture to a European the wonderfully rapid growth and bright colours of the flowers, or the blazing sun which renders them still more brilliant. I do not say that I would not prefer the English garden, with its verdure, its soft light and subdued colours, and its freedom from all obnoxious insects, but at any rate here it may be enjoyed all the year round, instead of for a bare six months. If, too, a garden is such a real pleasure in Europe, it can be readily understood how much more so it is to those who are far from their fatherland. It makes a house home, and in a great measure softens the hardship of exile.

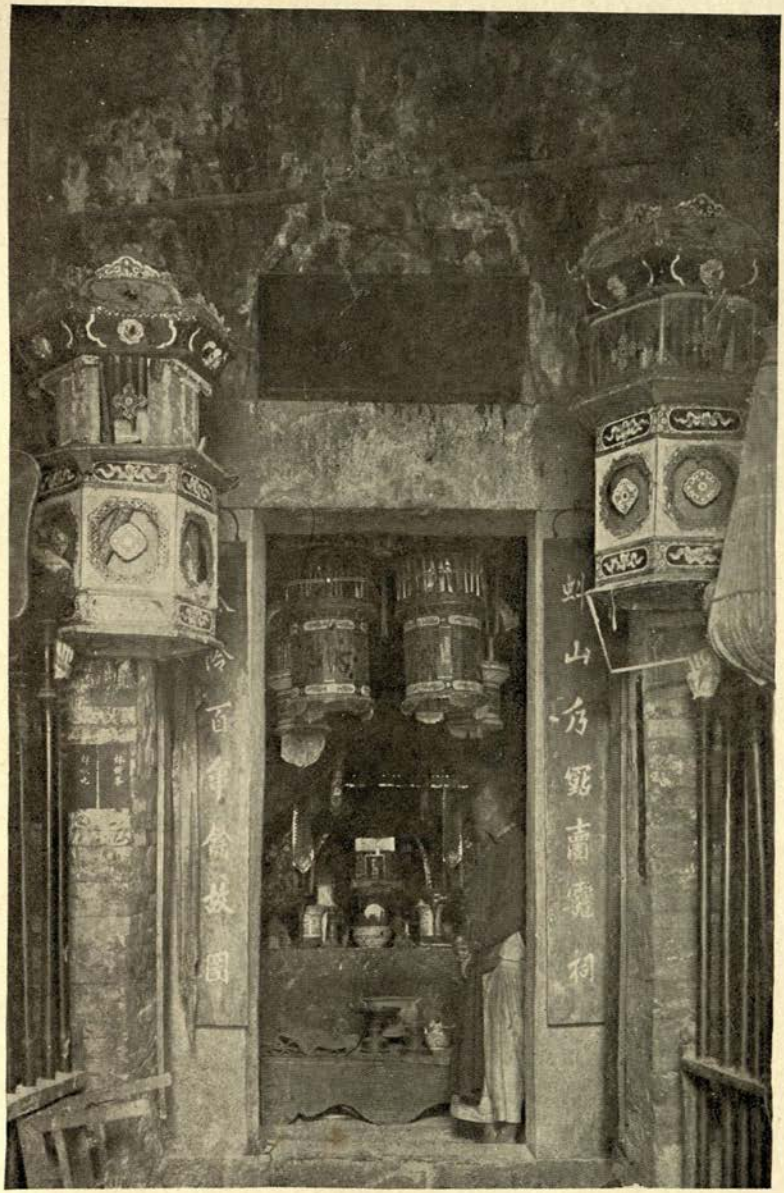
CHAPTER XII

THE TCHAM TEMPLE OF NHATRANG

History of the Tchams and their conquest : Tcham dress : Their temples : Pō Nagar's temple : Its architectural beauty : The goddess Pō Nagar : Tcham curios and hidden treasures : A Tcham legend

AMONG the numerous races who have lived in Indo-China there are none comparable to the Tchams. They have left monuments scattered over the country which give an idea of their high civilisation. After having dominated in Annam they disappeared before the Annamese. Now there are only a few representatives left, who live grouped in villages round Chaudoc and Phan Rang.

The existence of the ancient kingdom "Cyamba" was revealed in Europe by Marco Polo, who visited it in 1280. The Tchams are probably a race of Malay extraction and Indian civilisation, and though not the aboriginal people of Annam, they had been there many centuries when the Chinese first came into contact with them after their conquest of the Giao-Chi at the end of the second century B.C. At that time the Tchams, as described by the Chinese records, were not only a very civilised race, but rich and prosperous. Their country extended from



INSIDE THE PRINCIPAL TOWER OF THE TCHAM TEMPLE OF NHATRANG
ARRANGED FOR ANNAMESE WORSHIP

Saigon to the north of Tonking, and on the west to Siam.

In the quarrels between the Giao-Chi (who were now called Annamese) and the Chinese, the Tchams gave help first to one side and then to the other, and it was largely owing to them that the Annamese finally shook off the Chinese yoke for ever in the tenth century. No action could have injured them more. The Annamese, free from Chinese rule, were at liberty to devote their attention to quarrelling with and plundering the Tchams.

From this time forward severe fighting took place constantly between the two nations. Dumoutier has shown that the Annamese showed genuine military qualities in this campaign against the Tchams, who were slowly driven farther and farther back.[1] The only intervals of peace enjoyed by Tchampa during this time were when the Annamese were engaged in war with China. In the fifteenth century the Tchams were finally subdued, and from this moment till the French conquest of the country the work of assimilation began, and the original race declined.

The first French missionaries who arrived in the country at the end of the seventeenth century gave the name of Tchampa to the province of Khanh-Hoa, but at the present time it is necessary to go as far as Phan Rang to see a Tcham of pure origin.

Some of the women are quite beautiful; a fine specimen of a Tcham woman may be seen in my photo of a market-place at Phan Rang. The head-dress is quite different from that of the Annamese; it is twisted round the hair, and the two ends are allowed

to fall on either side of the face to the shoulder. The dress is very much like the *cai ao* of the Annamese, but instead of being a wide flowing garment it fits the figure much more closely. Their favourite colour seems to have been green. Occasionally one comes across a Tcham type in the midst of a squalid Moi village. Though the intermarrying of Mois and Tchams must have taken place many generations ago, the Tcham element constantly reappears without deterioration. It was quite pathetic to see a young Tcham girl, tall, lithe, beautifully made—a remnant of this ancient race—wearing the same clothes and living in the same manner as such savages as the Mois.

The religion of the Tchams was Islamism, or Brahmanism—namely, the worship of one of the three Indian gods, Brahma, Vishnu, or Siva, together with that of the "caktis," or wives of the last two, Uma and Laksmi. But local superstitions have now superseded everything. They still offer sacrifices, though they have forgotten the names of the ancient gods whom they thus honour. Neither can they now read the Koran.

Wonderful Tcham monuments and temples may still be found dotted about Annam and Tonking. The sites chosen for these temples were always on hills in the most beautiful parts of the country. The views from the temple of the goddess Pō Nagar (Bhagavati) at Nhatrang are the best to be had in a y part of that district. The temples of the Circle of Mi-son (Quang-Nam) are perhaps more complete, but ours at Nhatrang is by far the most interesting and beautiful. We had the opportunity of

visiting it very often during our stay at Nhatrang, and it was my favourite spot in the whole neighbourhood. It is situated on a hill about thirty metres high close to where the river runs into the sea. It overlooks the whole bay as well as the villages of Nhatrang and Culao, and from there you can see the river winding in and out along the valley. On the other side may be seen two lakes or lagoons surrounded by undulating land overgrown with dense tropical vegetation, and in the background mountains covered with forest. The colours on sea, river, and mountains at sunset are the most glorious that I have ever seen. Sitting on the steps—under the portal—of the temple I love to dream of the hundreds of men and women of this ancient race who have mounted them to worship at its shrine and to evoke the weird religious pageants and ceremonies of which it has been the centre.

The temple was probably built in the third century A.D. A Sanskrit inscription on one of the stones proves that Brahmanism was then the prevailing belief of the Tchams. The temple was destroyed in A.D. 774 by "very dark and thin men coming from another country in ships." They were pursued by Satiavarman, the Tcham king, who gained a naval victory over them, and in 784 he rebuilt the temple and cut the inscription which gives us these details. Another inscription mentions that Indravarman erected a golden statue to the goddess Bhagavati which "the avaricious Cambodians took away, but they died in consequence," and in 965 King Jaya Indravarman put a stone statue of the goddess in its place, which is probably the very

one that is now there. The last king to leave his name on any inscription was Rudravarman. He made a gift of precious objects to the temple of the great goddess in 1064. From the eleventh century onwards Sanskrit learning is less and less in evidence owing to the decadence of the race, but inscriptions in the Tcham language become more numerous.

The temple, like all the Tcham monuments, faces due east. It is composed of two brick towers with stone doors covered with inscriptions, and several small edifices are grouped round them. The tower to the left is the larger, and is consecrated to the goddess Uma. It is twenty metres long from east to west, including the porch by which one enters; the width from north to south is fourteen metres, the height about eighteen metres. Above the door is sculptured a dancing god, which may be clearly seen in my photographs; two little musicians playing fifes are on either side of him. In the interior is the splendid statue of the ten-armed goddess Pō Nagar, which is protected by a wooden construction. The goddess is rather bigger than life size, and is sitting Indian fashion on her stone altar. The breasts, which are rather large, seem to indicate that she represents maternity. All the ten arms have bracelets on them, the lowest ones on either side are resting on her knees, the left hand is open, with the palm upright; the right is shut. The others are raised and hold objects representing different attributes, such as a mace, a sword, a dish, a lance, and a stone about the size of an orange. A diadem is on her head; she is apparently dressed

in a "sarong," which probably covers tight-fitting trousers.

There is another statue in this same tower representing a woman seated; she is much smaller than the goddess and less finely sculptured, but the two statues are probably contemporary. She is called "the little goddess" in the inscription. A sentence in Tcham is cut on her back.

The tower to the right only measures ten metres from north to south, and thirteen from east to west, including the porch. Here the divinity is a "linga," crowned with a network of sculptured pearls, and placed on a brown stone slab.

All round on the outside of these towers there are many busts of women, their hair arranged in a diadem of three rolls, one above the other. Their hands are joined as if in prayer. From the bust the stone extends at right angles backwards for about the length of a metre. This shape enables these decorative figures to be fixed and built into the tower.

The surrounding buildings are themselves little temples containing either lingas or small statues of goddesses, the whole was probably surrounded by a wall, of which there are now very few traces.

The interior of the towers is quite small, that of the largest would not hold more than five or six persons. It is supposed that only the priests worshipped inside, the congregation remained standing or kneeling without. All are very dark, no light entering except through the door. The Annamese custodians used to light torches for our benefit, but a good examination of the sculptures and inscriptions was not easy—partly

on account of the apparent unwillingness of our guides, partly also because the flaring torches gave so unsteady a light.

The reason why custodians were appointed by the Annamese people is that they have appropriated the goddess Pō Nagar as their own divinity under the name of Ba-Chua-Ngoc. She is very much venerated, and twice a year, namely, in the second and eighth months of the Annamese year, fêtes with music and dancing are held in her honour. The sailors and fishermen make offerings to her continually of shoes, clothes, candles, and lanterns, and though the worshippers may have received no benefit from this veneration, yet at least it has been the means of preserving the temple from ruin.

The following is the Annamese legend relating to the goddess Ba-Chua-Ngoc. The goddess had no father or mother, but was born in a tree. Its owner was an old man who made his living by the sale of water-melons. He was vexed at finding that his fruit was continually stolen, and watched night and day for the chance of catching the thief. One day he succeeded in surprising a young goddess, whom he found so beautiful that he made her his adopted daughter. For a long time no man asked for her hand, but at last a king came from the north who fell in love with her the moment he saw her. He married her and took her back to his own country and there they had two children. Then one day she deserted her husband and children and came back to Nhatrang, where she asked a mason to build her a temple. The king, having found out her hiding-place, sent an

THE MARKET

THE CENTRAL FIGURE IS A TCHAM WOMAN

ambassador to bring her back. Should she refuse, he was ordered to chop off her head and bring that. The goddess, knowing this, cut off her own head and gave it to the ambassador when he arrived, who went off with it to his ship. Winds and storms came out of the head, and the ship sank with the ambassador and all its crew. From this moment the goddess became the object of adoration.

In 1906, M. Parmentier, of the "Ecole française d'Extrême Orient," arrived at Nhatrang in order to undertake the work of preserving the temple and to search for its hidden treasures. He built a little bungalow for himself and his wife on the spot, so that no brick should be dislodged nor clod of earth displaced without his personal supervision. The Annamese naturally did not like this invasion into their place of worship, but they were propitiated in one way or another, and the guardians themselves were tactfully appointed as police over the workmen. All the Annamese offerings which at different times had been placed in the towers were naturally left untouched.

One day, when we went to call on M. and Madame Parmentier, we had the good fortune to arrive just as a treasure had been discovered. It had been found about ten feet below the altar in one of the towers. Before the work of excavation could be begun, the tower had to be strengthened, or it would inevitably have fallen, and when at last the digging started M. Parmentier himself watched every spadeful thrown out and listened for the hollow sound which would indicate the approach of a cavity.

In the case of the particular treasure we saw, there

were several small objects, none of any great value, which had evidently been placed there as an *ex voto* offering by some pious Tcham. The first article we were shown was a heavy gold ring set with a green stone ; the claws which held the jewel were rather big and clumsy, but the setting was not unlike those of to-day. There was also another stone, rather like a dull opal, lying loose. It might have been glass, but M. Parmentier did not think that the Tchams knew of its manufacture. A metal teapot, green with age, from which the thin handle had fallen, and an ornamental silver bowl, with a cover rather like a silver sweet-dish, were next placed before our admiring eyes. Then came the inevitable rice-bowl and betel-box, and, what interested M. Parmentier more than anything, some grains of fresh-looking paddy. This showed that these things had not been hidden away, that, in fact, the offering had not been touched since placed there. M. Parmentier intended to sow some of the paddy but hardly expected it to germinate. The burial of this treasure he calculated dated from about the end of the eighth century. It awed me to be one of the first to look at and touch things which had not seen the light for over a thousand years.

When he had drawn, painted, and measured these Tcham curios, M. Parmentier was hoping to start excavating to the right of the big central tower. The original tower was not on the exact site of the present one, and it was beneath the altar of the first that he expected to find the most important treasure.

Many of the richest Tcham treasures, however, such as jewelled weapons and crowns, gold and silver plates,

altar ornaments, women's jewellery, are rarely found in the temples—they were entrusted to the Mois by the Tcham kings when obliged to flee from the conquering Annamese. The Mois buried them in lonely spots among the hills. The hiding-places are only known to some Moi chief, who hands down the secret at his death to his successor. The confidence of these Mois must be gained before further investigation can be made. They guard their secret jealously, for although a Tcham treasure owes nothing of its origin to Moi religion or race, they have a superstitious faith in it and believe that it protects them from all evils. Up till now no discoveries of treasure have been made beyond a few in the Province of Phan Rang and Phan Ri. Those investigated by Père Durand and M. Parmentier are of great interest for the history of the Tchams.

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CHAPTER XIII

TO THE INLAND HILLS—NHATRANG TO DABAN

Preparations for a two-hundred kilometre journey : Trials of a tri-car : Catastrophe to a group of native women : Meeting an elephant : Arrival in a village whose inhabitants had never seen a motor-car : Commotion wrought among oxen, fowls, pigs, &c. : Frightful state of roads : Safe arrival at Banghoi : Phan Rang : Breakdown : Return to Phan Rang : New start in pony-cart : No relays ready : Balat : Change of scenery as we approached the hills : Exhaustion of the last pony : Deluge of rain : Shelter at Daban : In the land of the tiger

A YEAR after our arrival in Annam my husband thought a change of air was necessary for my health. The Langbian plateau in the south of Annam naturally suggested itself. My husband knew it well; he had been sent some time before by the Government to study its climatic conditions, and had been most favourably impressed with the healthiness of the situation. But how to get there? If the journey could be arranged, the Director of the Agricultural Station on the farther edge of the plateau would make me welcome at his house. M. d'André was a friend of my husband, and would be glad of any visitor for the sake of the companionship for his wife and daughter.

Over two hundred kilometres had to be traversed,

however, to get there, not by train or coach, but in a cradle-cart or rickshaw, to the foot of the hills; afterwards it was a choice of horseback and a palanquin up the mountain-side. It was no small matter, especially as my husband could not obtain sufficient leave of absence to take me the whole way. But the longing for a cool atmosphere got stronger and stronger, and I urged on the preparations. It was useless to look out for a fellow-adventurer among the ladies of Nhatrang; either they had children whom they could not leave, or the undertaking was too unprecedented for their liking.

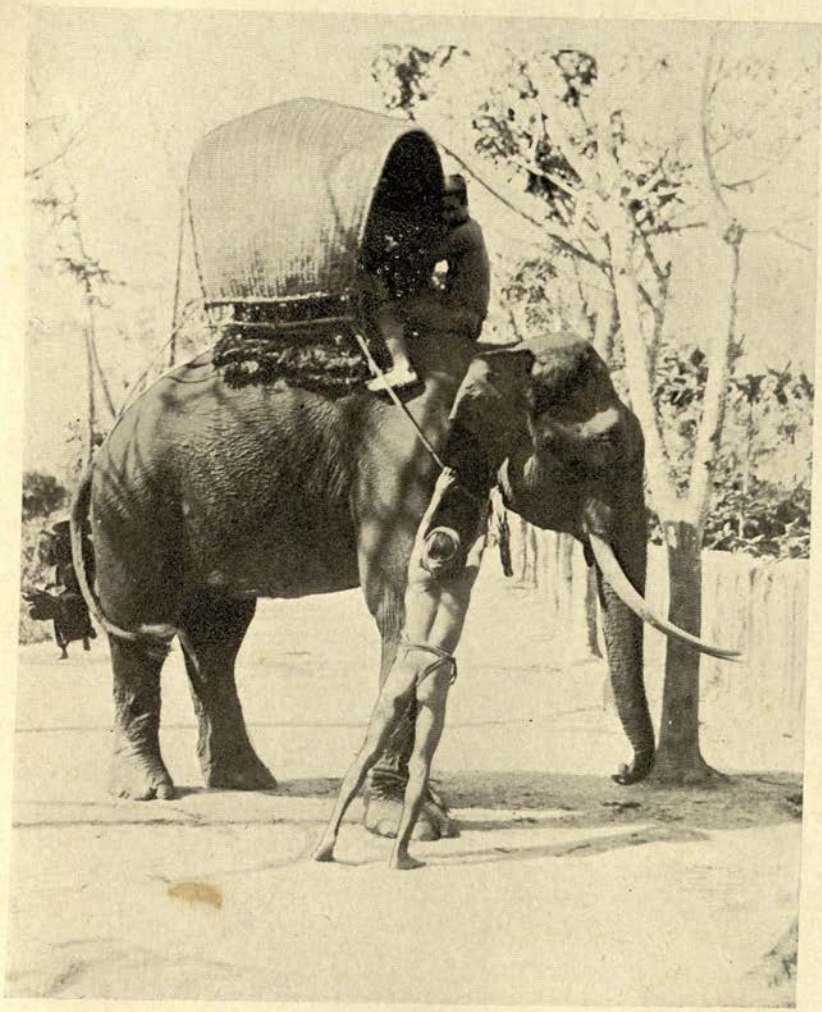
The day before we left Nhatrang, my husband decided to take me as far as possible in our tri-car. Perhaps the decision was rather rash; but people with new motor-cars have these little failings. But he wisely maintained arrangements already made for the pony-cart, so that we could be picked up in case of a breakdown.

The sea made a black, straight line on the horizon against a sky of silver and orange when we started off at dawn, and before the roads were much frequented we had done our first ten kilometres. Then, with the first rays of the sun, the women began to appear, their baskets laden with goods for market. They were generally in little groups, and walked as usual one behind the other. As a rule, they stopped when they saw us coming, and waited with averted faces till we had gone by; but one of these little processions, composed of about ten women, seemed so absorbed in conversation that they did not see or hear us. The hooter was of no avail, and though we slowed down as

we came near them, the first woman was so startled that she jumped aside and fell into the rice-field. I was rather taken aback by such a catastrophe, but still more horrified when I saw the other nine follow suit. Each one, following on the heels of her predecessor without looking round or about her, had instinctively imitated the jump to the side without being aware of the reason for it. When we heard their ejaculations and screams as they extricated themselves from the mêlée and picked up their overturned baskets, we thought it better not to stop. Nobody was hurt, and *we* could not re-divide their goods again. I was sure that each one would claim a little more than she had before, and that the wrangling which would ensue would divert their anger from us, even if they had so much as realised the cause of their disaster.

A few minutes later another encounter resulted in an equal fright to both parties. We were mounting a small incline, and coming sharply round a corner at the top, found ourselves nearly under the feet of the "Quan Bô's" enormous elephant. The two natives who were conducting it to the river immediately let go their hold and made off. Fortunately, just at the critical moment when we thought we were going to be trampled underfoot, the elephant also decided on flight, took a half-turn, and started at full speed across the rice-fields.

After we had bumped over the ruts and lumps between the few huts which compose the village of Suoigiau, we ventured on to a road on which pneumatic tyres had never rolled, and through villages



THE QUAN BÔ'S ELEPHANT

whose inhabitants had never yet seen, or perhaps heard of, the "fire machine." But the natives we met did not seem grateful to us for giving them what must have been an entirely novel sight. Those in rickshaws found themselves suddenly transported into the rice-fields by their terrified coolies, and were lucky if they remained sitting on the cushion instead of in water and mud. I turned round once and saw a Chinese merchant picking himself slowly out of the mud and looking first at us and then at his coolie, as if uncertain whether to thank the latter for saving his life, or to beat him for having been the cause of his dirty trousers. For a mandarin who was advancing on horseback we stopped dead, waiting for him to pass us. The precaution was useless: the horse turned tail and galloped off at such speed that we never knew whether the horse or rider had been the first to be seized with fright.

It was high time to reach a village, for we needed water. When Hoatan came in sight we dared go no farther, and alighted. I ran in front in search of a native, but the village at first seemed deserted. No children were playing in the road, no women squatting beside their baskets; but on closer observation I saw numbers of heads peeping cautiously out from behind the slightly lifted doors. They evidently had been warned that a great danger threatened them. Nobody could be persuaded to approach, and it seemed that if we wanted water we should have to go and draw it from the well ourselves. My husband finally turned off steam, and, with the cessation of noise and vibration their fear suddenly vanished. First the children, then the older natives, gradually came forward, and soon

ther was a crowd round the tri-car, those behind pressing forward, those in front pushing back, not liking the too close contact. We at last obtained a jar of water with half a cocoa-nut shell attached to a stick as scoop, but it was difficult to get enough elbow-room to fill the reservoir. When the engine was again put in motion there was a general scuffle and disappearance; those who had been lying on their stomachs or backs to peer between the wheels, apparently in the hope of discovering horses or other animals, rolled away like ninepins. At the first vibration we were left masters of the situation; no other soul remained in sight. The buffaloes, native dogs, black curved-back pigs, the fowls—in fact, all the animals with which the Annamese live, and which had not taken the precaution of staying at home like their masters, had narrow escapes. In some villages we created the greatest commotion. Only the oxen remained undisturbed; even when we went within an inch of their noses they did not budge; one, indeed, turned round and jumped some palings into a little native garden, causing considerable tumult, but the occurrence was exceptional.

Since Suoigiau the road had been bad, but after Hoatan it became worse than ever. There were places one or two hundred yards in length where we sank deep into the sand and stuck fast. Occasionally we managed to tug the car out ourselves, but more often it was impossible to move it an inch, and we had to wait till some natives should appear along the road. Even then it was useless to hail them, and we had to run after them and drag them to the spot. The bridges also had enormous gaps in them, but as they were

mostly made with branches the tri-car jumped with safety where a pony would have inevitably caught his feet. This had actually happened to one traveller, whom we found struggling to extricate his poor animal. We helped to unharness the pony, but it was only after giving its legs support from under the bridge that it could be liberated. We exchanged notes concerning all the other bridges before separating. Though there were many places where the car had literally to be hauled out of sand or mud, and we had several narrow escapes on the bridges, all went well till within two or three kilometres of Banghoi. There it stopped, and finally refused to start off again, in spite of all we could do. We were in the midst of the salt-marshes that surround Banghoi, so that there was little vegetation. As I was of no use with the car, I made for the only stunted tree within reach, and, sitting down in four square inches of shade, mopped my brow. What were we going to do? The sun was pouring down; the glare on the whitened sand was almost unbearable; it seemed impossible to wait three or four hours till the trap should catch us up, but it was also impossible to walk two kilometres in that tropical sun. Remembering that some bottles of St. Galmier and some bars of chocolate were stowed away under the seat of the tri-car, I summoned enough resolution to leave my scrap of shade and return to the highway. My husband was still working away with desperate energy, endeavouring to re-start the car; it was not a time for speech, and silently I lifted the seat. Imagine my feelings when I found the St. Galmier at boiling-point and the chocolate all melted away among the tools.

This was the last straw; to wait three hours without food could be done, but without drink—! Our spirits were at their lowest when three natives appeared. They unwillingly put down their baskets and commenced to push the curious vehicle, from which they probably supposed the horse had escaped. At the top of the slope on which we had stuck, my husband made another effort to put the car in motion. No sooner did the natives hear the first rumble of the engine than they fled. Calling would not bring them back, so our chance of making them drag the car to Banghoi, if we failed to move, was lost. After many fruitless attempts, the car, making a deafening noise, at last moved forward at its lowest speed, and we had to be content. The last two kilometres took us half an hour to accomplish. When we finally entered the primitive little inn where we were to stop the night, it was only 11 A.M., though it seemed as if we had done quite a day's work already. Nobody could believe that we had come from Nhatrang that morning without a boy or any sort of help except that which turned up along the road. Europeans were as interested as natives in examining the little car which had performed such a feat.

'My resolution to continue by a surer if slower method was broken through by my husband, who before nightfall had readjusted the car and received satisfactory assurances about the road. The whole population of the district surrounded us as we made our preparations to start the next morning, and by the time the motor started forward, the natives had lost their first fear and came running along on either side

of us. But soon the last lithe little runner dropped behind. For the first forty kilometres we had the same bad roads as the day before; the natives perhaps were even more frightened, and the consternation we caused as we ran through some of the villages greater. It was only when within twenty kilometres of Phan Rang that we came upon a really good surface. We flew along at our quickest pace; no collapsed bridges, no bumps to stun us, no deep sand or mud. The trials of the preceding hundred kilometres were forgotten, and when we reached Phan Rang we had but one idea, to go straight on to Daban. By 9 A.M. we had entered the hotel and surprised its inmates by the noise of our car. My husband immediately telegraphed to Dr. Yersin to obtain another day's leave of absence, and by twelve the answer had come telling us not to break our victorious run.

But about ten kilometres from Phan Rang we had an accident. Four or five bullock-carts lumbering along ahead of us were at length drawn to the side (actually the same side) after vigorous hooting. The passage was still narrow, as piles of stones had been placed on the other side for road-mending. We did not go particularly slowly, however, as all the coolies were standing at the heads of the bullocks, and no obstacle stood in our way. Our dismay can be imagined, therefore, when we saw the coolies of the last cart let go their animals and run off. The noise of the motor frightened the bullocks and they turned at right angles, completely blocking the way. Already my hands were stretched out to protect my head from the collision which must ensue, when the tri-car suddenly

ran up to the top of a pile of stones and came to a standstill. My husband, in order to prevent my head being broken under the cart (I was seated in front, much lower than himself), had to choose between smashing down into the rice-fields or guiding the machine as evenly as possible up the hillock of stones. He took the latter course. Fortunately the car neither overturned nor toppled over on the farther side. We dragged it down on to the road, but the insult of this treatment was evidently too much for it. This time the breakdown was permanent. It was settled that I should take the first opportunity of getting back to Phan Rang. When a wretched old malabar* came along driven by a small Chinese boy, I was only too thankful for the lift, although I was squeezed between two dirty old women chewing betel. From the hotel I immediately sent off a rickshaw and coolies, but it was dark before the sad little procession made its appearance. How different from the triumphal entry in the morning!

My journey was not interrupted by this accident, for the Resident arranged that I should join forces with an astronomer, M. Lecadet, who was starting for Dankia the next morning. He was commissioned to inspect the meteorological installation there. I was thus very fortunate in getting a companion for the whole journey.

Early the next morning my husband, after giving us many instructions about relays, coolies, baggage, &c., started towards Nhatrang, M. Lecadet and myself towards Daban. For the first fifteen kilometres or so

* *Malabar*, a small closed carriage.

all went well, but just before we reached the first tram * we came upon a pony being led by a coolie. Our little saïs jumped down from behind us and proceeded to harness it in the place of the one we were driving. We were surprised that it had not waited for us at the tram, but as neither saïs nor coolie understood French no explanations were possible. A little farther on, we caught up two more ponies. It was then apparent that our relays had not been sent out early enough from Phan Rang, or that the coolies had been gambling in some cai-nha near the village instead of taking up their appointed posts.

The road from Phan Rang followed the Song Cau River; from time to time we saw its flowing water at a bend in its course, but at Balat, the last Annamese village we were to pass, we crossed it by the famous iron bridge, and saw it no more. This bridge was built for the railway when quick means of transit to the Langbian had been thought desirable. If it did not fulfil its original intention, at least it was most useful to us.

Up till now the road had been fairly frequented, there seemed plenty of movement between the different hamlets dotted about among the green carpet of rice-fields. We also met many natives of Tcham origin, easily distinguishable from the Annamese by their straight noses and different carriage, even if they had not been wearing their full turbans and green tunics. After Balat, where we arrived dragging our relays behind us, the character of the country changed; no more signs of cultivation, no rice-fields, no natives on

* *Tram*, a station where relays of coolies or ponies may be had.

the roads, no thatched roofs sheltered by high cocoa- and areca-palms. On either side lay a forest of stunted trees, with here and there a great mass of rounded granite, which had the form and colour of a sleeping elephant. We were reminded that later we might very likely see the real thing! The continual look-out we were obliged to keep up saved us from monotony.

Ten kilometres from Daban the last pony was exhausted and we were forced to unharness it and let it rest. It was already after midday, so the hope of getting up to Dran before nightfall began to vanish. Was there any place to sleep at Daban? My husband had noticed a chalet there, and we had since heard that an agent of the Public Works Department was living in it. Would he be able and willing to give us shelter, if there really was no possibility of making the ascent to Dran? Having stopped at the bottom of a slope near a wooden bridge, we descended into the dried-up river-bed where the sand and shade made a comfortable resting-place, and there prepared ourselves a little lunch. I boiled water in my alcohol lamp to make bovril, M. Lecadet carved the chicken, and we had a very good meal, ending up with some refreshing tea. It was a pretty spot for a picnic; as I looked round me I became aware that the scenery had again changed and that the vegetation differed from anything we had come across before. Instead of stunted oaks and scrubby bushes there were huge massive trunks which seemed to stretch up to the sky. Below was a dense mass of tropical foliage; every plant seemed to be making an effort to rise above its fellows and expand its leaves to the sun and

THE WHOLE VILLAGE IN OUR WAKE

ON THE EDGE OF THE TROPICAL FOREST

air. They vied and struggled with each other for predominance. It was an inextricable tangle, impossible to penetrate. We had reached the thick vegetation of the lower slopes of the mountain, and had seen deer, peacocks, jungle fowls, from time to time along the road, but fortunately no elephants. There were many traces of them, however, on the dry river-bed where we were seated, and they must recently have come to drink there. In spite of the silence one did not forget the teeming animal life that the thick foliage hid.

A drop of rain brought us back to realities. We jumped up, bundled our lunch things into the trap and harnessed up. Our little saïs had been left behind some way back, as we dared not tire the last pony more than was absolutely necessary. Between walking and trotting we managed to cover a few more miles, and then the pony refused to advance farther. We both alighted, and leading our exhausted animal, started to trudge the last part of the road. But the heavy rain soon soaked my mackintosh and skirts. I could not walk and was obliged to get into the trap again and sit down in the pool on the cushion. M. Lecadet continued to haul along the poor pony, which at every step was less and less willing to move. At last we came to a long wooden bridge, which, from my husband's itinerary, seemed to be less than a kilometre from Daban. The sight of it gave us new courage. The pouring rain, high trees, and thick undergrowth lining the narrow road made it so dark that it was impossible to help feeling a little nervous. One exaggerates

dangers when soaked to the skin, and really this unknown road seemed full of mystery. Our delight was great when we suddenly saw a thatched roof peeping out from between the trees a little higher up. The last hundred metres mounted a steady slope, but the pony smelt the stable and made a noble effort. At the top we found ourselves on a flat open space where the trees had been cut down quite close to the ground. There were several sheds or Annamese huts on one side, and on the other a wooden bungalow built on piles. We went towards the latter, and were met on the steps by an Annamese interpreter, who, in answer to our questions, told us that a European was at that moment at Daban. He pointed to a bungalow a little way up the mountain-side, where M. Landon, of the Public Works Department, was living. We immediately clambered up the slope as fast as our wet clothes and the path, which was a slippery stream, would allow us. The rain made so much noise that for some time nobody heard our calls and knocks. At last M. Landon himself came out, and at once put the lower house at our disposal. It contained three large rooms, only the middle one being occupied by the interpreter. M. Landon also asked us to dine with him that evening.

My boy Sau had put in an appearance, and by the time I had collected my luggage, which had arrived on a bullock-cart from Nhatrang a few days before, he had brought me two steaming petroleum-tins of hot water. I did not take the trouble to unpack my bath, for as the planks were not very close together, it was quite easy to take a hot shower-bath without doing

any harm. The water ran away between the boards, and the floor was soon dry again.

We took tea on the verandah, seated on wooden cases; my spirit-lamp balanced on the verandah railing. Warm and dry, we were at last able to laugh over all our adventures of the morning.

During dinner our host told us many a thrilling story of the tiger. Its presence was a continual source of danger, not only at night but in the day, for where M. Landon was road-surveying in the forest, its huge form was often seen prowling between the trees. Only a week before it had secured a victim. The small brother of M. Landon's cook had been carried off while sleeping with several companions in a hut quite close to his house. Familiarity breeds contempt—the door had been left open. Towards morning, when the fire had burnt low, the tiger had ventured near, clawed the child, dragged him a few yards, and then, seizing him by the shoulder between his teeth, had bounded with him into the jungle. The screams of the poor little lad awoke the other coolies, who, brandishing their clubs and hatchets and uttering wild yells, started in pursuit. The tiger, startled by the noise, dropped its prey and made off. But the boy's shoulder was almost bitten through by the monster's teeth and there was little hope of saving his life. We were told that the same tiger was still hovering round and we should very likely hear its war-cry during the night.

On descending the hill again we found that our two boys, who had left Phan Rang at the same time as ourselves, had arrived, so an early start could be made the next morning.

I was soon in the land of dreams—a tiger was harnessed to the trap instead of a pony, and two others were being towed behind. I was terrified at having their noses so close to my back, but dared not cut them loose, as I felt that they would be wanted later on.

CHAPTER XIV

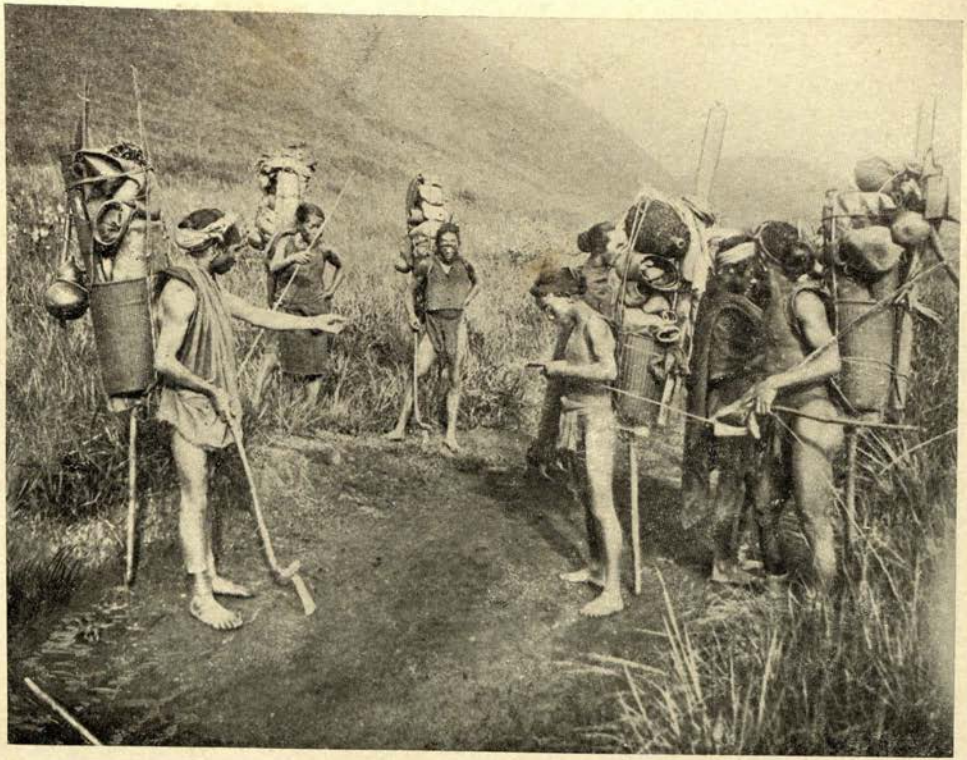
TO THE INLAND HILLS (*continued*)—FROM DABAN TO DANKIA

The Mois' physical appearance; their baskets : A "tailed race" : A steep climb on horseback : The pines : A snake : Dran : Isolation of Europeans in this district : A second long climb : General view of the plateau : M. Canivey's escape from a tiger : His punitive expedition to a Moi village : Moi bows and arrows : A Moi woman : Dankia

On awaking on the next morning it took me some time to realise where I was. As soon as I remembered the two past days' events I rolled gingerly out of my camp bed and seized my watch. Half-past eight! yet we were to have started at six! Dressing in feverish haste by the light coming in through the persienne doors (there were no windows in my large room) I rushed out on to the verandah. M. Lecadet was sitting there writing a letter to his wife and looking as if he meant to spend the rest of his life in Daban. And not without reason, for he had just discovered that contrary to what we had understood the previous evening neither his coolies nor the horse with which he was to make the rest of the journey had arrived. I had probably enough coolies for the baggage of both but another pony was indispensable. While we were

discussing the situation, we saw a little procession winding through the trees down the mountain path. When it emerged into the open, we distinguished six or seven Mois with a pony (saddled and bridled) led by an Annamese who proved to be one of M. d'André's servants. We were saved!

Although it was not the first time I had come across a Moi, the sight of the twenty or so naked rough-headed individuals who were to accompany us was not a re-assuring one. The word "*Moi*" in Annamese means "*savage*" and really the term was not misapplied. All the same we had not gone far before I was more fascinated by these hillmen than I had ever been with the Annamese. As soon as they saw us astride on our ponies, they came forward, and pouncing on the different packages strapped them to bamboo boles with long strips of cane. The strongest naturally got hold of the lightest burdens, but as we had divided them off pretty equally, there was not really very much difference. We had been told that no Moi must be given more than thirty kilogrammes to carry or he may drop his burden *en route* and refuse to pick it up again. There were two Mois to each bamboo and soon all was hoisted on to their shoulders and the little cavalcade started off. They were big solid fellows, well-proportioned and of an upright carriage, very different from the slight wiry Annamese. Their height ranged from one metre sixty-five to one metre seventy or more. They looked far more capable of conquering the Annamese than the Annamese of conquering them, but as I caught sight of the contemptuous glances of our boys towards the savages, there was no doubt as to the real position. The Mois



RESTING—THE STICK PROPS UP THE BURDEN

were darker than the Annamese, in fact some of them were almost copper colour. Their coarse black hair was done up at the back of the head in a chignon through which was often stuck a long-handled bamboo pipe. Sometimes the chignon was fastened with a black wooden comb, which served, I found later, to support little bundles of tobacco carefully wrapped up inside the hair. When their tobacco had come to an end, they smoked dry grass which they picked up along the path. Their expression was much franker than that of the Annamese and they laughed and talked freely to each other the whole time. Brass anklets and bracelets on legs and arms, and a loin-cloth into which a wooden sheathed knife was thrust, composed their whole costume. Only two among our convoy were the proud possessors of short Annamese cotton jackets. Attached to each bamboo that the Mois carried were two rolled-up mats of dry grass. At the first drop of rain they all put down their burdens, unstrapped these grass mats, which were about a yard square, and placed them on their heads. They were thus well sheltered down to the waist. Their appearance was most comic, one could not see their faces and they looked like so many minute thatched roofs walking along. All their food and drink was carried by two Mois who had accompanied them for this purpose. They had large bamboo plaited dossers on their backs, which held all the little sacks of rice and earthenware vessels. It is rare to meet a Moi without one of these baskets, for when on his way through the forest his hands are occupied with either lance or bow and arrows. When he goes any distance he takes all his possessions on his

back, carrying several baskets one on the top of the other—a veritable scaffolding which towers up much above his head. It looks as if the whole erection might come clattering down any minute, because he is quite unable to balance or rearrange it with his hands. It is fixed up when he starts and must thus remain till he arrives at the sleeping-place. For this reason a stout stick is dragged along tied with string to the bottom-most basket, so that as soon as he stands still he has only to put out his hand behind him, catch hold of the stick and prop it under his baskets. His load thus supported, he can at least lean back and rest his shoulders if unable to sit down. A story goes that the first Europeans who travelled beyond the coast of Annam returned declaring that they had seen a race of men with tails. If there is any truth in it, these sticks were perhaps the "tails"!

For the first mile or two after leaving Daban, the path was so steep that our ponies could advance no quicker than the Moi bearers. There was no need for haste, however, as we should have to break our journey again at Dran. The scenery and vegetation, moreover, were so glorious that it would have been a pity not to have given ourselves enough time to enjoy them. We had been climbing about an hour when M. Landon suddenly appeared, his pony scrambling up the side of the ravine like a cat clambering up a tree. He said that as it was Sunday (I had quite lost count of days) he had finished his work for the day and would accompany us to Dran, where he was going to lunch.

At about five hundred metres, we discovered a pine here and there among the rich tropical foliage, a sight

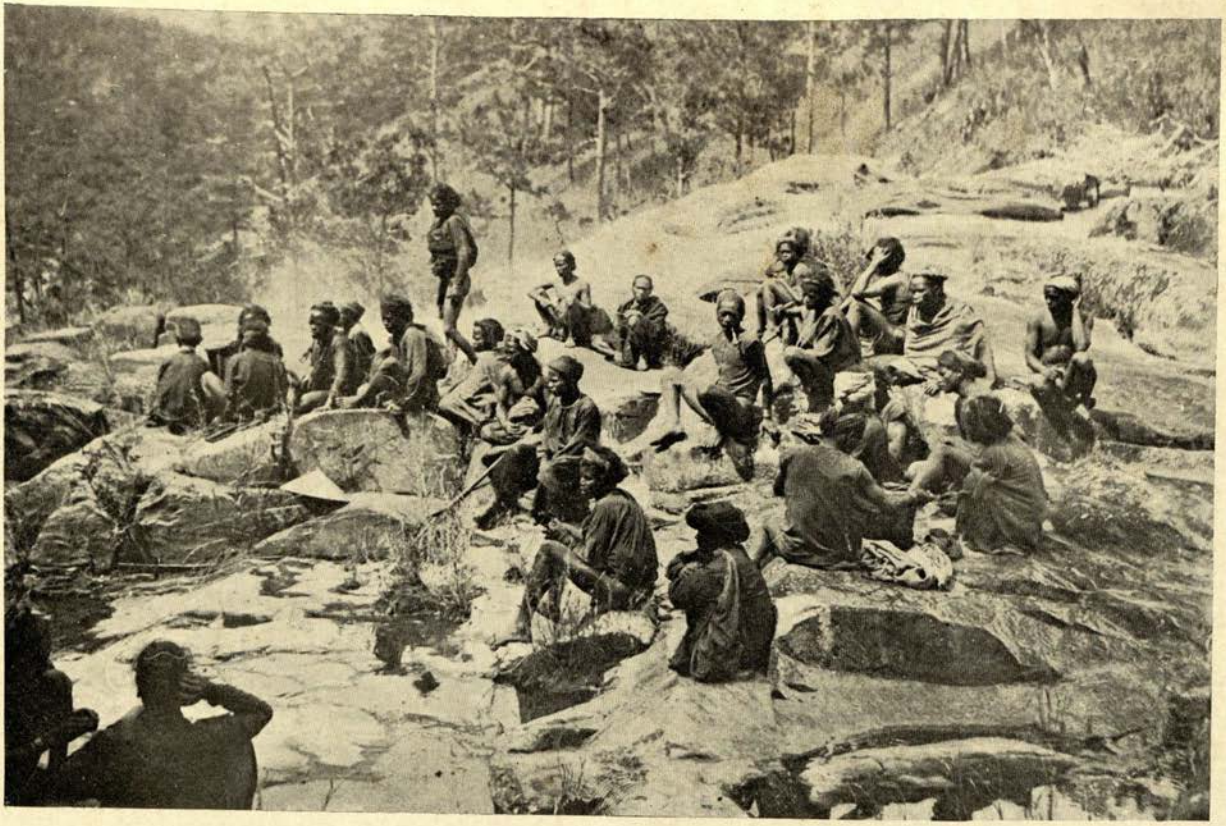
which promised a speedy change of atmosphere. But already the air was cooler and more invigorating than the plain. Nearly all the trees had orchids or other parasitical plants growing on them, and occasionally one was in full bloom. There were numbers of coloured creepers, too, which made an impenetrable wall as they fell to the ground from the topmost branches of higher trees. Sometimes the silence was broken by the shrill cries or loud wails of monkeys, and the branches above our heads shook and rattled as a family party took flight. We could not always see them distinctly through the leaves, but my boy shot two and brought them to me in triumph. They were both Gibbons, which are the only representatives of the man-like apes in Annam. One was entirely black except for a buffy gular patch, with long thick fur. It has since been named *Hylobates gabriellæ*, after me. It was a new species. The other, *Hylobates leucogenys*, was also black, but had white whiskers. My boy himself pointed out the separation of the thumb and big toe from the rest of the digits. He mimicked their way of walking erect and the manner in which when he had shot them they had held their gaping wounds together with their taper fingers to prevent the blood gushing forth. Their tortured expression when wounded prevents most Europeans from shooting them. The next day he killed a long-tailed *Presbytis*. It had thick grey fur of a lovely shade of colour with white trousers and was almost as big as the Gibbons.

For the last two or three kilometres before reaching Dran we passed through forests of pines, short grass covered with cones took the place of the tangled

undergrowth, so that the open space between the straight trunks gave a more extensive view. Every now and then we got glimpses into the distant blue valley and were able to follow the flat road we had taken the day before.

Once when in advance of our party my pony had suddenly started back, and on looking down I saw a huge snake with its head upraised, hissing with fangs extended. It so frightened me that, instead of pulling my pony round as I ought to have done though the path was very narrow, I dismounted. But in trying to jump as far away from the snake as possible, I slipped and fell under my pony's legs and on to the reptile's curled-up body. The fright was reciprocal, both it and I scrambled out of the way, but my boy coming up discovered it in the long grass a few yards from the path. I took my gun and aimed point-blank at it. When dragged on to the path it was found to be a python seven feet long.

After crossing the Danhim, the chief tributary of the Donai, on which Saigon is situated, our path ran across the flat valley till we reached Dran on the slope at the farther side. Living here were two more Europeans of the Public Works Department. It appeared that Sunday was their "At Home" day, and that all the isolated Europeans of the hills made an effort on that occasion to share their luncheon. We were invited to join the party. The conversation was a contrast to what one hears in Europe; instead of cricket matches, the new play at His Majesty's, or politics, the subjects were tigers, new modes of making cartridges, and the difficulties of work with bad weather or lack of coolies.



A PICNIC NEAR SOME FALLS

What a different life was led here to the only one I knew before coming to the East. All had brought their own bread, all those at least who knew the art of baking it in an earthen oven. To the less skilled it was an unobtainable luxury. Many, too, had a shoulder of venison or a jungle fowl attached to their saddles when they arrived, and the meal consisted chiefly of game from the forest.

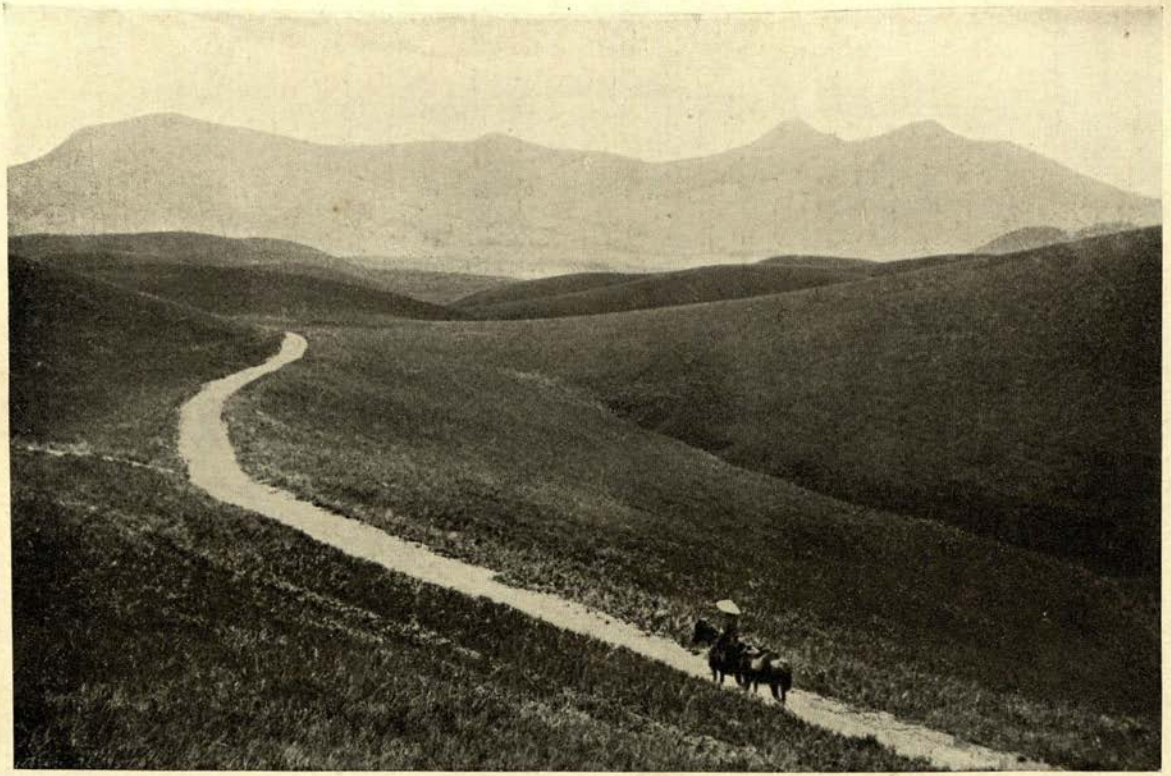
Directly after lunch many were obliged to start off again, for it would be dangerous to be caught by the darkness and their ponies could not be hurried on the steep and rocky paths.

With the first streak of dawn the next morning I was astir; yet M. Lecadet was standing by his pony's head ready to mount when I appeared. We had sixty kilometres to do before Dankia could be reached, so there was no time to be lost. After a steep climb of a few hundred metres, the path continued with very little difference of level, following ridge after ridge and twisting in and out among the pines. We took a last look into the valley of the Danhim. The mist was thick when we started but it was being gradually absorbed by the sun, and as one veil after another was mysteriously drawn away we were able to see every detail of the beautiful valley—the broad river flowing between flat bright green meadows, with vast pine forests on the slopes at either side. Now that our path was fairly level it had also become much broader and we seemed to be wandering through an immense park, the pines were more and more splendid and not too close to one another, the grass quite short, the slopes gently rounded off without any abrupt lines.

Every now and then, however, we had glimpses of other ranges of mountains with deep valleys between, and the extent and magnificence of the view at these moments reminded us we were in Central Annam.

It was about midday when we saw the plateau for the first time. What an unexpected discovery! What a contrast to anything we had already seen! Over a vast extent lay a mass of small rounded hillocks, treeless but covered with short grass. They were all very much of the same shape and height. It was like a sea with rippling green waves. In the midst, the elevated peaks of Mount Langbian rose up like a rocky island. Dankia was situated at the foot of this mountain, on the other extremity of the plateau. The difficulties of our journey must be at an end. The plateau is so peaceful and soothing, no steep slopes, no impenetrable tangles of undergrowth, only pine groves in the gorges between the hillocks.

The roofs of the little chalets of Dalat in the foreground glistened in the sun. They were situated some distance apart, all on the slope or the summit of some hillock. Outside one of these chalets was a group of Mois. They were engaged on their midday meal and were too occupied even to look up at us. Taking handful after handful of rice from the little bamboo-plaited sacks which they carried, they stuffed it all into their mouths at once. Monkeys could not have gobbled more voraciously, they never swallowed one mouthful before taking another, but kept pressing the rice between their teeth till I thought their cheeks would burst. When the sacks were nearly empty, they raised them to their mouths and shook the last few grains



OVER THE LANGBIAN PLATEAU

down their throats, just like a horse with his nosebag. It was a very different way of eating from that of the Annamese, who, if he has not got chopsticks, takes any two odd pieces of stick rather than touch the food with his fingers. Though these Mois made no sign, we thought they must be our second relay of coolies and stopped to inquire. M. Canivey, the government delegate to whom the chalet belonged, invited us in, and his wife insisted on giving us lunch. As all our provisions had remained behind with the bearers, we were very glad to accept. During the meal we heard from M. Canivey himself the story of their terrible encounter with a tiger. He and his wife were out snipe-shooting one day not far from the house when they saw a tiger on the confines of the forest. M. Canivey levelled his gun and fired. There was a roar and the animal bounded into the forest. In spite of the entreaties of his wife and his own better judgment, for he knew the tiger could not be seriously wounded with such small shot, he started in pursuit. One *linh* armed with a French military rifle followed him; the other stayed with his wife. As soon as the two men entered the wood, there were sounds of a scuffle and then the words rang out, "Je le tiens, tue-le." Through the branches Madame Canivey saw the tiger with its two front paws on her husband's shoulders, its teeth dug into his gun, which he had held out crosswise when the animal sprang upon him. As the man and beast stood thus, she saw the *linh* advance, place the muzzle of his rifle close to the tiger's head and pull the trigger. With a half-groan, half-yell, the monster fell and Madame Canivey dashed forward. She found her husband bleeding profusely

from different wounds where the tiger's claws had torn his flesh. He was able to walk home, but neither my husband nor any other doctor of the province had been able to mount to the Langbian plateau at that moment, and for a few days he lay between life and death. Madame Canivey told us that though this adventure took place four years previously, she still trembled at the growl of a tiger in the night.

We heard also many stories about the Mois, for M. Canivey knew them well. He had been the first European on the plateau and still collects the Government taxes from the tribes in submission to French rule. They were not always as friendly and jovial as we had imagined from our short acquaintance with them. While on a punitive expedition, M. Canivey had been attacked and wounded by arrows. Fortunately they were not poisoned, but many precautions have to be taken before visiting the independent tribes and the method followed is one of patience rather than of force.

As we were about to start off again, Madame Canivey offered me her chair for the rest of the way. Wrapped, therefore, in a big rug, for the wind was cold, I crossed the plateau in lazy fashion. I had four bearers, but it was only after a minute that I discovered one was a woman. She looked quite as strong and capable of the physical exertion as the men; indeed, it is the Moi wife who bears the brunt of the day's work while her husband smokes his pipe in peace. Her muscular arms and shoulders and big calves were as fully developed as those of the stronger sex. Her black coarse hair was done up in an untidy chignon, through

OUR CONVOY WAITING TO BE PAID

which was stuck one end of a long flexible stem. The other end was continually in her mouth, and was used alternately as a magnified toothpick or for scraping out her little wooden pipe. A straight unstitched piece of cloth, about half a yard wide, was twisted round her waist and came down to her knees. This cloth, the only kind worn by the Mois near the plateau, is woven by themselves at a certain village. It is blue, and striped with little lines of white and red threads about half an inch apart. It has a border of many colours, but the effect of the whole cloth is in no way gaudy, and if the material was less narrow it would do well for a lady's winter coat and skirt. The woman had adorned her neck with numerous strings of glass beads, which reached down to her waist, and her legs and arms with bracelets and anklets. On one leg the stiff brass ornament was at least six inches high. It had made a deep wound above her ankle-bone, which was kept open and irritated by every step she took.

The tone of voice, accent, the rolling of the "r," was so European that it seemed to me that if only I listened attentively enough I should understand what they said. It was the greatest contrast to the monotonous sing-song of the Annamese. Later I found that a European can pick up any of the Moi dialects very easily. The language has none of the intonations which make Annamese so difficult; the vocabulary among such a primitive people is naturally, too, very small. They laughed and joked in an open manner, and would often run me down the slopes, enjoying themselves like children. Going up hill, they would

often stop and give a sort of low whistle between half-closed lips. This was evidently their way of showing they were out of breath, but they never opened their mouths widely or panted, as we do after any great exertion.

From time to time they pointed to right or left, and I saw elks on the gently sloping grassy hillocks; there were sometimes groups of five or six together. The beautiful animals just raised their heads, looked at us a minute, and then went on grazing quietly.

The only person we met while crossing the plateau was a Moi driving a herd of small pigs. He was probably taking them down to the plain to exchange them with the Annamese for a few handfuls of salt. He did not seem in any hurry, for he was lying at full length on the ground, watching his little black charges out of half-closed eyes. It was the Bible picture of the Prodigal Son. This one human creature made the loneliness of the region more marked. He had evidently lighted a fire close to him, but the friendly flame was extinguished, leaving only a bare patch of blackened grass. Whether he had lost patience with his swine, for driving them with a long flexible cane is more difficult than carrying them in baskets in Annamese fashion, or whether their short legs would bear them no farther that day, I do not know. But if he meant to spend the night there where he lay, he would have to relight his fire, and keep his animals close to it, or he would find their number reduced in the morning.

About 4 P.M., as my chair rounded a hill, the Agricultural Station came into view. There was no doubt

THE VILLAGE OF PRENH

possible; the even outlines of cultivated fields and ploughed land were not traced by the hand of a Moi. Two chalets with thatched roofs stood on the highest part of the plantation; lower down were other roofs, probably of sheds, stables, paddocks, &c. M. Lecadet must have arrived some little time, for he had soon out-distanced my chair. It was a great relief to think that the journey was safely accomplished, but I pitied my road companion, who had to do it again in two days' time.

When refreshed by a bath and a change of clothes, lent me by my kind hostesses, I was able to tell them all our adventures on the road. We talked on till the light waned on the green hills all around us, and the last streaks of red and yellow faded in the sky. Then they led me into the dining-room, where the shut doors, the stove in the corner of the room, and roses on the dinner-table gave me the impression of being in some country far away from Annam. On retiring to bed I was thankful for my hot-water bottle and four blankets. The next morning, as the cool invigorating air came through the window and I saw the bright sunshine and clear atmosphere, it was obvious that my husband's statements about the plateau were not exaggerated. Anybody whose health was run down by the heat of the plains could not but benefit by the change; a month here would be equal to a month spent in Europe.

CHAPTER XV

IN THE KINGDOM OF THE MOIS

A Moi village : Children decorticating and winnowing the rice : A Moi hut : Darkness and smoke : Moi furniture : Men and women round the fire : Hygiene among the Mois : A Moi woman's confinement : A Moi funeral : Moi tombs : Sacrifice of a buffalo : The priest's oration : The slaughter : The banquet which follows : Moi justice ; The Sorcerer : Methods of discovering the culprit

In Dankia we were in the midst of the Mois; no Annamese village was within a hundred kilometres, and the last European fifteen kilometres farther back; consequently we had plenty of opportunities of visiting the Moi villages and watching the life of these savages. The three hamlets close to the station knew the d'André family, and even the dogs ceased to bark when they recognised their friends climbing over the palisade. Every Moi village is surrounded by a strong fence, not only to keep out the tigers and other wild beasts, but to prevent the pigs from straying. Not long ago this fence used to act also as a fortification against attacks from neighbouring tribes, but, even before the French arrived, the Mois on the plateau had established their supremacy over all others in the region. In the unexplored districts to the north and west the tribes still continue to fight among themselves;

it is their chief sport as well as the easiest means of obtaining food, weapons, and wives.

Dankia was the first village I visited. It lay just at the foot of the Langbian Peaks. Unlike most Moi villages, which are generally built in the most inaccessible spots near some precipice or torrent and can only be reached by dangerous rocky paths, Dankia is quite easy of access. After crossing a flat strip of land on which paddy and maize were growing, we came upon a group of children busily engaged in decorticating the rice. Lifting their long wooden poles, they brought them down with all their small strength into the hollow tree-trunk, into which were put a few handfuls of paddy. The Annamese method is less arduous: they simply employ a heavy piece of wood worked up and down with their feet by means of a lever. Other children winnowed the rice by placing a little at a time on flat baskets, throwing it deftly into the air and catching it again. The husks were thus blown away. No child seemed to be over thirteen or fourteen, but they worked steadily and at the same time looked after their smaller brothers and sisters. I took snapshots of these tiny mites cuddled together on the ground, but when the camera was raised they were afraid, and hid their faces in each other's laps. One even started screaming, and an elder child had to leave her work and pick it up to reassure it. All the little girls over five or so had a piece of cloth round their waists, but the little boys were naked.

The village was very irregularly laid out; the long huts, with their thatched roofs, nearly reaching the ground, were disposed here and there without order

so that the fence had to make many turns and angles to enclose them all. We climbed over and made our way between the dwellings. The ground was black and slushy, and the quantities of pigs, buffaloes, and goats did not improve the smell nor cleanliness of the place. Very few inhabitants were to be seen outside; here a woman sat on the bare earth, her legs stretched straight out, one child tied on her back, two others by her side; there stood a man with a red blanket thrown over his left shoulder in the antique style. His splendid limbs, powerful and well-proportioned, his erect and calmly defiant attitude, gave him all the dignity of an ancient Roman. We asked him if we could see the *pholy*,* but it appeared that he was absent from the village. After I had taken snapshots of all that was to be seen outside the huts I was eager to venture inside one of them. Mademoiselle d'André said she had never entered without the *pholy's* company; she thought, however, that we might just peep inside. We did so. At first it seemed as if all the huts were empty, but on listening attentively we heard a low murmur of voices proceeding from one long dwelling, and stooped down to enter at the low door, which was little more than a hole in the thatched roof. There was a furious barking and scuffling round my legs, but before any dog's teeth had found their way through my gaiters some one flung stones at the animals, and they dispersed again into the darkness. The little light which filtered in through the door revealed no human being. I moved forward a few steps, stumbling over articles on the floor, and then,

* The chief of a Moi village.

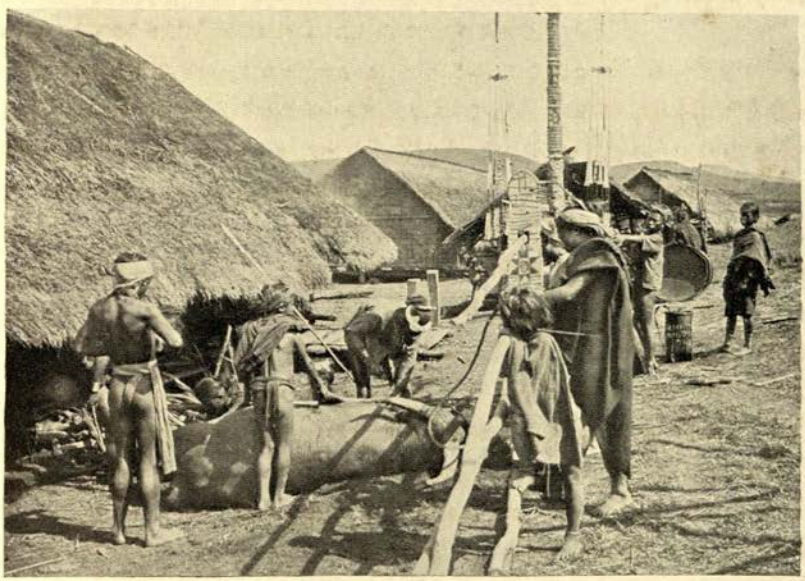
my eyes getting accustomed to the darkness, I perceived a flickering flame at the other end of the hut. Every now and then dim forms squatting round the fire were lighted up. One figure, evidently a woman, was stirring a big cauldron suspended over the fire, and the piercing eyes in the strange face often turned from the pot to fix themselves on us. The group recalled to my mind the witch scene in *Macbeth*. Mademoiselle d'André had now joined me, and though we were both nervous we advanced towards the "witches." We stumbled against bamboos and baskets, knocked our heads against jars hanging from the low roof, finally, after what seemed a long distance, groped our way to the little circle and squatted down beside them. Till now they had not interrupted their conversation, but as soon as we sat down among them they evidently addressed us. It was most disappointing that we could not understand what they said.

Even when our eyes grew accustomed to the dim light it was difficult to make out the features round us distinctly. There were both men and women, the latter generally nursing an infant. All were smoking, but as there was a limited number of pipes each one after a few whiffs passed it on to his neighbour. The firelight glistened and sparkled on the jewellery with which the women were covered, and especially on many large brass and pewter rings hanging, as I thought at first, from a string round their necks. I was horrified to find that they were ear-rings, and were hanging actually from the ears themselves. I had heard how the women of this tribe disfigured their ears, but never imagined that they carried the

practice to this extent. The ear-lobes had been so stretched that the flesh around the cavity made in them was no thicker than a piece of string, and they were dragged down by the weight of their metal rings to the shoulder. The big heavy ear-rings themselves hung down as far as their breasts and jangled against their necklaces. It seemed impossible for a piece of skin so slender to bear such a weight; and indeed the wearer takes a very necessary precaution against its breaking, either by replacing the ear-rings by a round piece of polished wood when she goes out to work, or by holding and supporting them with both hands. In spite of all her care, however, a sudden jerk sometimes tears the skin, and woe to the young unmarried woman to whom such a catastrophe occurs, for she will never find a husband! All the suffering she has endured from childhood, as she has gradually increased the size of the wedge of wood in the ear-lobe, will have been in vain. The older women of the village, whose ears were in youth their greatest ornament, are the most repulsive in their old age, for either one ear or both are broken, and the two bits of dirty black skin hanging down on either side of their face are loathsome to behold.

There is another tribe whose men adopt this practice, but to a smaller extent. The hole they make in their ears is large enough to hold a medium-sized cork, which is the ornament they prefer; they rarely wear metal ear-rings. Around the plateau a man's claim to beauty is gained by grinding down his front teeth. We saw this operation being performed: a lad was lying with his head firmly grasped between the

A SOCIABLE GATHERING



THE MOI LANCES HAVE DONE THEIR WORK

operator's knees while he filed away the teeth with a piece of sharpened pumice-stone. It is a most painful process, and one that lasts several days, but a youth rarely shrinks from it, for he is from that time forward looked on as a man and no longer as a boy.

After we had been in the hut about ten minutes, a man stretched out his hand, picked up a log of wood, and placed it on the fire. The flames leapt up, and had we not seen the unmoved expression on the faces around us we might have feared a conflagration. For hearth there were but a few stones with a layer of ashes on the top; there was no chimney or window to let out the smoke. It was in fact the dense atmosphere as much as the darkness which prevented us from seeing anything clearly. Then, too, all the different objects of the hut lay in such inextricable confusion that it was difficult to distinguish one thing from another. Dossers of all sizes, some of which were smoked as black as ink, had been thrown carelessly here and there, jars of *ternum** stood piled one on the other in a corner. Here lay a bundle of sugar-canes, there a small mound of unshelled maize, near to us were all their implements of work and war, hatchets, lances, unstrung bows, knives; a little farther off brass gongs, drums, and pipes, all the Moi instruments of music. It is by the number of brass gongs and the size of the jars of *ternum* that the wealth of a village is gauged. As I stared into the farthest recesses under the slanting roof, I could just make out the forms of other women with children on their backs or knees. Why

* *Ternum*, the alcoholic drink of the Mois, made from fermented rice.

did they sit aloof? Were they the wives of a secondary rank, and not allowed nearer, or did they prefer the greater silence and darkness?

Nobody had moved an inch all the time we had been in the hut, and we left it as we found it. Not even a child came running after us to the doorway. We saw other children outside, however, who were induced to come up to us for lumps of sugar. All the children over three or four seemed strong, well-formed little mites, but with the Mois, the "survival of the fittest" is the irrevocable law. The ignorance of the Moi woman is much greater than that of the Annamese, and here in the hill country the mother has two extra difficulties to contend with—hunger and cold. The children are naked, and the only covering they have when they go out is the cloth with which they are tied on to their parents' backs, so that the continual change of temperature from a hot smoky hut to the cold air outside is too sudden for them. Also the Mois, like the Annamese, stuff their babies with rice from an early age; it is painful to see how deformed their little bodies become after a meal, when the skin is distended to its utmost capacity. Further, the dictates of the village sorcerer, who is consulted on the most trivial occasions, are often fatal. Another reason for infant mortality and the decay of the race is the treatment of women before and during their confinements. As Moi dwellings are common to numbers of families (in no tribe does a family have a hut to itself, though in some the young unmarried men live together apart) the woman must get up immediately after her confinement, for the hut is taboo while she is still lying down.

A FUNERAL AMONG THE SAVAGES

IN A MOI VILLAGE

A woman, too, continues her ordinary outdoor occupations till the very last moment, and it therefore occasionally happens that she is confined some distance from the village and returns in the evening herself carrying her baby. The result is that her health is often impaired, and that her subsequent children, if she has any, are feeble and die. The birth of a child, male or female, is, however, greeted with joy, for it is a source of wealth and security to the village.

As we returned home, we met men with lances in their hands and dogs at their heels. They had been out hunting, a clear indication that food was scarce in Dankia. A characteristic of all Moi tribes is their want of thrift—they never sow enough rice for the whole year, and the six months of prosperity after the harvest are followed by six months of starvation. During the latter time, if neither deer, wild buffaloes, nor other forest game can be shot or trapped, they fall back on rats, grasshoppers, frogs, spiders, and other insects, and they go far afield even to grub for roots and search for berries.

Most ingenious traps are laid by the Mois all the year round, for beast, bird, and fish. Even in war, traps play an important part. The Mois hide them in the undergrowth or the branches of some overhanging tree along the path leading to the village, and as soon as the unwary enemy brushes against the mechanism, he is pierced by a poisoned arrow. This is the greatest drawback to visiting the independent tribes. There are quite enough difficulties on the precipitous mountain paths, without falling into a trap or being poisoned by an arrow from a hidden bow.

One day, from the verandah of the Dankia chalet, M. d'André pointed out to me a long line of men and women climbing up a little rounded hill on which grew a grove of trees. So vast was our horizon from the house, that this grove looked scarcely more than a clump of trees; yet it was very conspicuous, for, with this one exception, no trees grew on the summits of the hills. The Mois from time to time set fire to the plateau when the grass is dry, but they take care that the flames do not destroy this sacred grove, which has been a burial-ground for ages. It was a funeral procession that we now saw mounting there. Through our field-glasses we could see the coffin, and as quickly as possible I seized my camera and followed.

There was no heed for hurry, for, when I reached the top of the hill panting for breath, no ceremony had begun—the grave had not even been dug. The grass was so long just outside the wood that I saw no one till I was upon them. They were squatting there, their elbows on their knees, no expression of sadness or any other emotion on their faces. As it was too wet for me to sit down near them, I determined to look at the other tombs while awaiting further developments. The greater part of the graves were only marked by earthen jars half filled with rain-water, but over those of the chiefs were built miniature huts. The thatched roof was ornamented with pieces of wood shaped like the horns of a buffalo. Some were quite overgrown with grass and creepers, but I determined to enter one that seemed to have been recently built. I was obliged to crawl on hands and knees through the narrow opening, and even inside

one could not stand upright or see anything distinctly. I called to my boy to pass me matches. There was a cupboard of rough planks dyed with buffalo's blood, in which was a jar of *ternum*, two gourds, an Annamese porcelain bowl, a hatchet, and some clothes. By means of the last match I discovered an umbrella, the savage's great luxury and his first effort towards civilisation. If I had had a whole box of matches at my service I could not have stayed a minute longer. The smell and damp, and the fear that the Mois might resent my curiosity if they discovered me, made me scramble quickly back into the open. I remembered, too, M. d'André's warning to keep close to the Mois, as the grove is a well-known refuge of tigers. On my return to the burial, two men and a woman provided with rough hoes were standing up and nonchalantly hewing up clods of earth. After each movement they took a few minutes' repose, and seemed lost in contemplation; the rest of the spectators had not changed their position and were not even watching the progress of the work. It was impossible to examine the coffin closely because of the smell, but I could see that it was made from a hollowed-out tree trunk and that a few rough strokes with black and red dye had been laid on with a brush here and there. Lying on the top with its legs tied was a small chicken about a week old, cheeping piteously. If the poor little thing constituted a sacrifice it was not a very generous one. The dead woman was a wife of the *pholy*. The chicken was not killed, but left to die, and I learned later that the Mois always abandon some living animal on the tomb of a newly buried person, so

that the soul shall enter into it and not return to disturb the village.

At last the coffin was laid in the shallow grave; on the top, over the head of the dead body, was deposited a bowl of rice and a little jar of *ternum*, both of which were carefully covered with big leaves before the earth was thrown over. A hollow bamboo was placed upright and allowed to emerge above the earth from the rice-bowl so that it could be replenished from time to time. The Mois revisit their dead and continue to provide them with food for about a year. In some tribes, however, when a certain time has elapsed they open the grave and scatter the ashes to the wind. This custom is probably a simple pretext for robbing the dead of the jewellery that has been buried with them.

As I returned with my Annamese servant through Benur, a high pole was being raised there. The Mois were ornamenting it with rough sculptured wooden birds, making symmetrical cuttings in it, &c., using only for the purpose their curious awkward-looking hatchets. This meant that the funeral ceremony was not yet terminated and that a buffalo sacrifice was to follow. This is a typical custom among all Moi tribes and is frequently practised. Whenever there have been several deaths in a village, the epidemic is thus, as they believe, stopped; it takes place also on other important occasions—when the rice is harvested, at the marriage of the *pholy*, or after a victory over a neighbouring tribe. The following morning Mademoiselle d'André and I wended our way towards Benur and climbed the hill overlooking the village.

THE BUFFALO SACRIFICE

THE MOI CHIEF OFFICIATES DRESSED IN ANNAMESE COSTUME

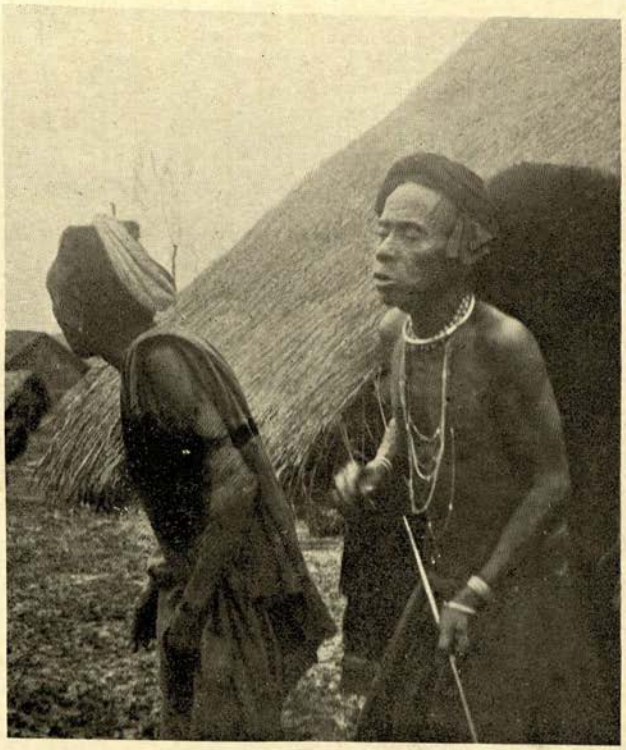
We wanted to see this rite, of which everybody speaks who has visited the Mois. The buffalo designed by the sorcerer for the sacrifice was already tied to the pole which had been erected the day before. As soon as the sun appeared over the hill behind us, a chief, dressed for the occasion in Annamese tunic, trousers, and turban, came forward, and placing the palms of his hands together, began a long monotonous oration. Sometimes he turned towards the victim, sometimes to the villagers, who were watching from round about. Suddenly, before we were aware of what had happened, the buffalo was dead. Two men had run forward with hatchets from either side and had hacked at its front legs so that it fell on its knees, the chief immediately cut its throat with a dagger, while other Mois pierced it in twenty places with their lances. The animal had not had time to groan or struggle. The blood which streamed from the wound in its throat was caught up in a brass bowl and carried away with pomp. Then the improvised priest began his oration again, till he was interrupted by the sound of pipes and gongs from the nearest hut. As soon as he disappeared, men, women, and children came from every side and began to skin and cut up the animal—for the victim of a sacrifice is always eaten afterwards. Nearly all the meat was carried into the hut from which the music proceeded, so probably the feast was to be held there.

By the time we had clambered down the hill-side, a pool of blood on the ground and the buffalo's horns attached to the pole under which it had been sacrificed were all that was left to view. The banquet was in full swing close by. The smoke not of one but of

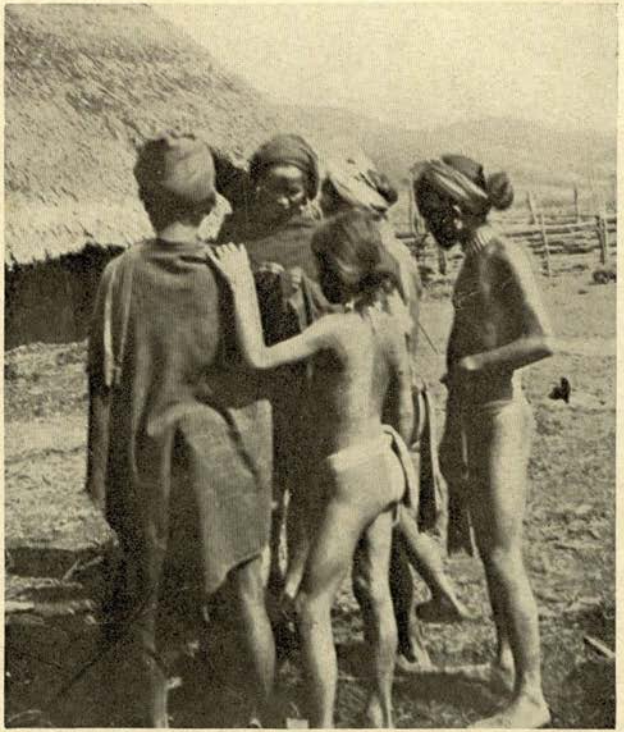
about a dozen fires was blown in our faces as we peeped into the hut, but nevertheless we could make out the squatting groups and the pieces of buffalo meat which were hanging over the flames; in one corner the jars of *ternum* were already to the fore, and the priest with a favoured few was squatting among them and smacking his lips in pleasant anticipation. One jar was provided with a bamboo, the thicker end of which was steeped in the beloved beverage, the other in the mouth of the connoisseur. After a few sips the drinker with a sigh of satisfaction passed it on to his neighbour. We knew that the whole village would be soon thus engaged and that before morning not a drop of the precious liquid would be left. At such a moment a Moi village is somewhat dangerous. No idea of preserving the buffalo meat for the days to follow occurs to them, though food is so scarce. Such thrift is quite contrary to their nature. They gorge themselves like wild beasts (the children making themselves quite ill), and then return to starvation diet as before.

So engrossed were all in their fête that nobody had seen our heads at the hut door, but as we turned away we met the village sorcerer. He beckoned to us to follow him, making signs of drinking with a bamboo, but his movements were so rough and his voice so brutal and hoarse that we thought he was drunk already and did not respond to his invitation. In fact we felt very frightened of him for a moment.

The sorcerer plays a very important part in Moi village life. He is more feared than the *pholy* himself. It is he who performs cures by drawing stones



THE VILLAGE SORCERER



SAVAGES EXAMINE MY WATCH

from the stomach of the patient with his teeth and spitting them on to the ground with the utmost gravity. It is he who appoints the time and place for a burial or a marriage and foretells victory in war. He, again, denounces the thief when a robbery has been perpetrated. If his prognostications are false or his medicine futile, he lays the blame on some unfortunate member of the community, who, he declares, has cast a spell over the village or patient. But he does not always point out the culprit at once. Holding an egg in his hand, he makes all the inhabitants of the village pass in front of him one by one. As the guilty person walks by, the egg breaks. This scene naturally impresses the savages and heightens the sorcerer's reputation for magic. The culprit is almost always a woman; she is forthwith sold as a slave to the Laotians or Annamese. If, however, the sorcerer is foolish enough to designate some woman who can find friends and defenders, the tables are often turned. It is then he who falls into disgrace, or else both man and woman are made to submit to certain tests. There are two which are considered particularly efficacious, that of water and hot metal. In the first accuser and accused are thrown into the river nearest the village. They must stay under the water as long as possible; he who first shows his head above the surface is the guilty person, the other goes free. The whole population assemble on the bank to watch this curious scene, which calls forth the greatest excitement. In the ordeal by hot metal, the burning liquid is poured into the hands of each, and the one who holds it longest has spoken the truth.

Such courts of justice, more than anything else, show the primitive nature of the Mois; though all tribes are gentle and unaggressive as a rule, they sometimes break out into acts of savagery, which remind one that is wise not to despise their superstitions or to hurt their susceptibilities when living or travelling among them.

CHAPTER XVI

THE AGRICULTURAL STATION

The discovery of the plateau : The proposed sanatorium : Foundation of the Agricultural Station : Temperate and tropical fruits and flowers : Cattle-breeding : The Mois as farm labourers : Moi slaves : Their hatred of the Annamese : Wages paid in kind : Good-bye to the Station : Visit to a Moi village : Hospitality of Moi women towards their sex : Arrival at Dran : An adventurous ride : An incident on the homeward drive

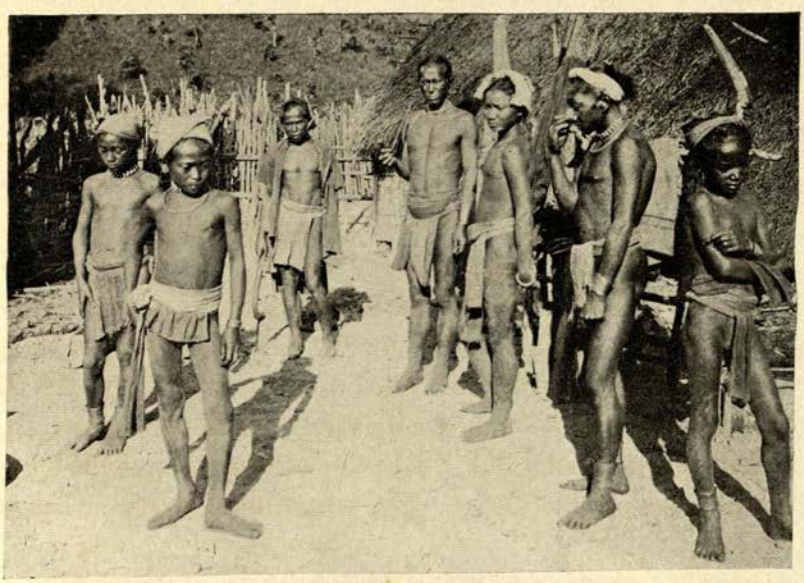
IT was in 1898 that Dr. Yersin, when on an exploring expedition through the interior of Annam, first discovered the Langbian plateau. He was greatly surprised after traversing so much rough country to arrive at a completely open undulating plateau across which flowed two peaceful streams. It was fifteen hundred metres above the sea, measured twenty by fifteen kilometres, and had a cool and invigorating climate. He immediately saw the advantages of this most unexpected discovery, and recognised the benefit the colony might derive from a sanatorium built on such a spot. He communicated with M. Doumer, then Governor-General of Indo-China, who visited the plateau and immediately fell in with the suggestion.

M. Doumer never did things by halves, and within a year of his visit, a road was in course of construction

and ood being cut from the surrounding pine forests for the erection of bungalows. Then and there he chose Dalat as the European centre and appointed the sites for the Residence, Post Office, &c. Fifteen miles away from this small town which he had planned, at the farther end of the plateau, he selected a spot for the foundation of a model Agricultural Station which should ultimately supply the Sanatorium with meat and vegetables. In the meantime experiments were to be made with European cereals and vegetables. The average yearly temperature was found to be 18°.7, and the rainfall not too heavy in the summer months; water could be brought from one of the rivers in small canals for the purposes of irrigation; in fact everything seemed favourable to the enterprise. Till means of transport were available, the station was also to supply food to the Europeans whose work should bring them to the plateau.

M. d'André, an agriculturist from the south of France, was appointed director; and now after nine years' effort he is rewarded by the most marvellous results. Magnificent crops, green and gold, extend over the slope; there are fields of oats, barley, maize six feet high, sugar-cane, and black wheat. Round the chalets flowers make masses of colour; along the garden paths magnificent roses, carnations, dahlias, nasturtiums, violets, balsams—English spring and autumn flowers all growing together among tropical shrubs. The kitchen garden filled with beans, peas, carrots, lettuces, and egg-plants, has the advantage over a European one in that it produces

IN DANKIA VILLAGE



STATION COOLIES

a succession of these crops all the year round. Strawberries, unknown anywhere else in this hot, insect-infested Annam, flourish here. They were growing on the very same slope as pineapples and banana-trees, and you have your choice between tropical fruits and those of a temperate climate. Avenues of pine-trees contrast strangely with the banana-trees, the rose with the bougainvillea, in this enchanted land.

The cattle-breeding experiments have also proved very successful. M. d'André's first move in this direction was to import some Breton cows and a bull from France. Not only was he able to keep them up to their original standard of excellence, but, by cross-breeding, he enormously improved the native cow. There are now cross-breeds which give as much milk as the Bretons, and in size might be taken for European animals.

It is a very pretty sight to see the different herds returning over the hills in the evening. Though they are all widely separated during the day for grazing purposes, they appear on the horizon at the same moment towards sunset, coming from every direction, and each herd enters its stable within a minute or two of the last. This operation of stabling the various herds, which only takes five minutes, in spite of the number of cattle, was one we liked to watch. The punctuality of the Moi herdsmen, who had no watches, was astonishing; they never erred, neither keeping their cattle waiting nor hurrying them up at the last moment.

The Mois make good herdsmen; they seem fonder

of animals than the Annamese, and treat them more humanely. Their agility and dexterity in driving or securing the fierce Breton bull or a huge dangerous-looking water-buffalo is most surprising. But though they seem admirably suited to this kind of work, they will never remain long enough in service to become really expert. This is the great disadvantage of Moi labour. Their love of independence makes them unwilling to come to the station for more than three or four weeks at a time, and in no case can they be persuaded to sleep on the premises. The Mois never work for themselves unless it is absolutely necessary. Every year they suffer famine because they are too lazy or improvident to sow enough paddy for themselves, and therefore it is not surprising that they dislike to work for others. Unless requisition were in force, a European would never be able to hire a coolie. As it is, only the slaves or the very poorest inhabitants of the village are available. The slaves of these communities do not suffer physical hardship from their subordinate position, they eat and sleep in the same hut with their masters and are allowed to marry; only when paddy must be sown, salt fetched, or a requisition obeyed, they it is who are sent forth. When there are not enough slaves the *pholy* sends the women of the village, and it is only after a refusal to employ women and when the village is threatened with punishment that the men will take the place of their wives. On the station women are not objected to; they work as well as the men. But neither slaves nor women will consent to stay very long, and

they are allowed to go as soon as substitutes are forthcoming.

The new contingent has to be taught to handle each tool, for the Moi possesses no instrument of agriculture beyond a very primitive plough. In general he uses nothing but a stick; with this he makes holes in the ground, in which to sow his paddy, after having first burnt down the trees and grass.

The Mois perhaps less dislike the work and fixed hours than the contact with the Annamese. The two races have been sworn enemies for centuries —the civilised Annamese have always plundered the savages and driven them from one fertile valley after another. Since the French regime open warfare has been stopped, but robbery and plunder still go on in secret. While I was at the station several cases of petty thefts were brought to the notice of M. d'André by Mois who had confidence in him. One day the *pholy* of Benur came to say that Mink, the Annamese cook, had committed a robbery in his village. He had been driving four small pigs through and had stopped to eat and rest there. At his departure he left the small pigs but took four big ones. To find out the truth, the pigs were driven back to the village accompanied by Mink, the *pholy*, and M. d'André. No sooner were the animals beyond the palings, than with one accord they all scuttled as fast as their short legs would carry them into the different huts where it was quite apparent they lived. The four small pigs, on the contrary, were wandering about disconsolately, not knowing which way to turn. The evidence was conclusive; Mink was punished

by having to leave one of his pigs in the village as compensation.

Though the Annamese makes a considerable profit out of the timid, much despised Moi, he never comes willingly to the plateau. He dislikes leaving the plains, and his health is apt to suffer in the higher regions; the hope of supplementing already high wages can alone attract him.

The Moi wage is twenty cents a day for a man, fifteen for a woman, but though this is the official rate, they generally prefer to be paid in kind, in matches, cloth, or above all salt. Many tribes to whom salt is almost unknown use the ashes of a plant called "Yamkam." The inhabitants of the villages in close proximity to the station now recognise the value of money, but the slaves often sent from the surrounding hamlets under their control have no use for the little bits of metal, and prefer something more tangible. Some of them before coming to Dankia had never seen a white man, no European having visited their district. In order to count the number of days they worked, they tie knots in a piece of string or cut notches in a bamboo at every sunrise. No Moi is able to tell his age or has any idea of time. Writing is an absolutely unknown art.

The Mois at Dankia soon became as familiar with me as with the d'André family; when I passed by, they used to call out for tobacco, and the children for *pia* (sugar). If I had something to give them they grinned with satisfaction; if I had nothing they still grinned. Their expression was always frank and

open, far more expressive than the taciturn unemotional face of the Annamese.

After having mounted the Langbian Peaks and visited the near villages I was very anxious to go farther afield, but just as we had planned an excursion, a telegram came from my husband telling me to start back on the following day; he would meet me at Dran. It was therefore decided that if I could come up again during the dry season we would then fulfil the programme already traced out.

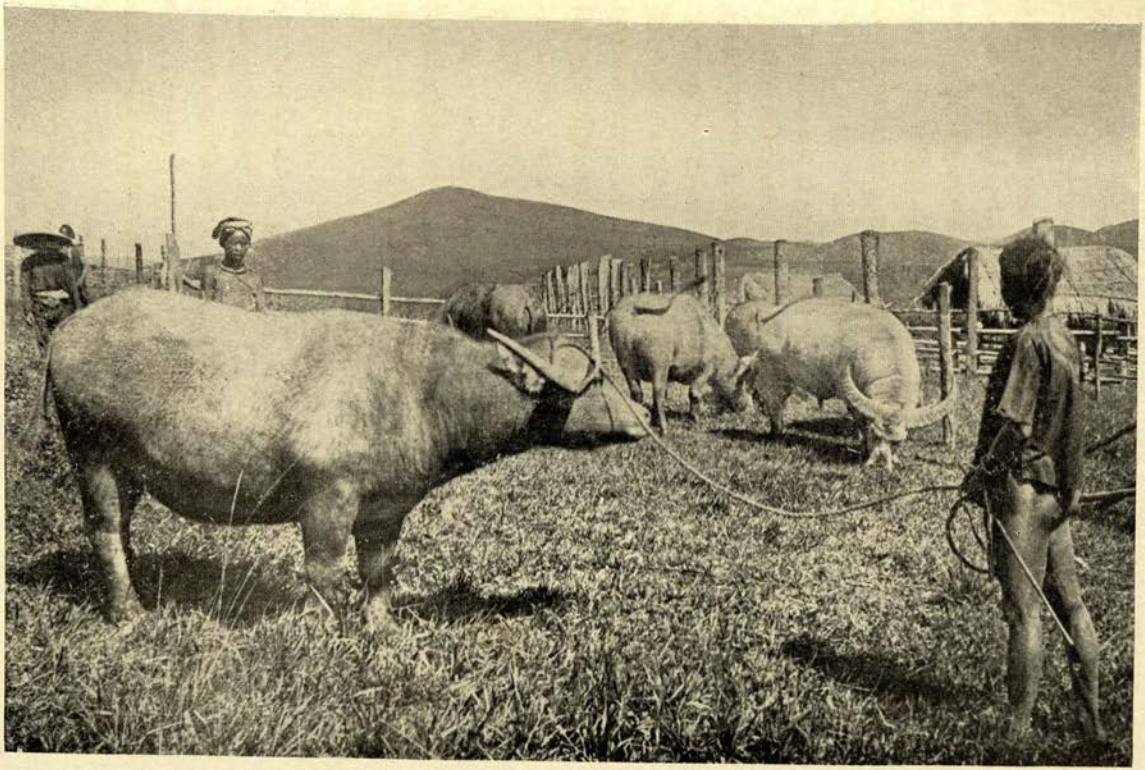
Mademoiselle d'André accompanied me to Dalat. Afterwards I was alone with the Mois, my boy having been sent in advance with a pony for my husband. I had had to get rid of our other boy a few days after my arrival, his commercial instincts having caused so many disturbances in the Moi villages around.

As my chair was being carried away from the plateau, I suddenly determined to go a little out of my way to visit a village where all the blades for hatchets and knives in the district were said to be made. The path was so overgrown that soon the chair could get no farther, and I continued my way on foot with two of the Mois. The village was farther off than I had imagined, and I might have thought it deserted if the pigs and chickens had not been evidence to the contrary. My guides quickly disappeared into a hut and I was left standing in the empty central square. Soon heads peeped out of the different dwellings and from behind the barrier; first men, then women and children appeared. When the women were quite certain that I was one of their own sex (that was evidently the great question for them), they came up,

seized me by both hands and dragged me quite forcibly through the village to a certain hut. There they spread a mat on the mud floor and tapped and beckoned me to squat on it. The dwelling, empty when we had entered it, soon filled with women, but not a single man approached. It was strange to find myself confronted by all these curious pairs of eyes. They talked me over from head to foot, as was apparent by the way they touched my gaiters, hat, hair, watch-chain. . . . Then they made me spread out my hand and placed their own beside it, comparing colour and size. Their touch was in no way timid, rather was it rough, but not as if they wanted to hurt me. Finally a woman brought some lighted logs and placed them nearly on my toes. Perhaps they thought I was cold. But no, they were for the purpose of lighting the pipes with which another woman followed! I was offered one and did not like to refuse the hospitable gift.

As soon as it was possible without offending them I made a step towards the door and crawled out. My guides were nowhere to be seen, and it was only after much expostulation (in English) that a man from the crowd left off staring at me, entered a hut, and brought them forward. They had evidently been treated even more hospitably than myself, and I was suddenly filled with fear for my walk back. I entirely forgot all about the iron and steel manufactures that I had come to see, and have never discovered till this day if I even went to the right village.

On reaching my chair I sat down in it and waited



A FINE WATER-BUFFALO

to be lifted, but the rest of the cavalcade seemed as little inclined to move as my two guides. How I longed to have somebody with me whom they feared and who could thus make himself obeyed, were it only an Annamese boy. Once again on the move it was only when the valley of the Danhim spread out again below us that I dared to stop the Moi who was carrying the provisions. Till then I had been afraid either to rest or eat, for fear the Mois should sit down and refuse to get up again as before. By the time our little cavalcade reached the pine-wood house, where my husband said he would meet me, it was half-past six and almost dark. My husband had not arrived. Very soon I should be obliged to give up all hope of his coming, for nobody can travel in these regions after dark. With the help of the Annamese, who was in charge of the house, I prepared our beds. As soon as that was done, he disappeared without warning and left me entirely alone. The Mois in a shed close by would be of no use if I wanted help, and the two Frenchmen whom we had met on our way up were nearly a mile down the hill. By the light of a single candle which stood in continual danger of extinction from the draughts, I ate and went to bed. Just as I had groped my way under the mosquito-curtain, steps resounded on the verandah. Impossible that my husband could arrive at that time of night! yet it was not the bare feet of a native that I heard, but the nailed boots of a European. Then came a thundering knock at the door, but till my name was called I was too frightened to answer. It was indeed he, but he had encountered so many difficulties on the road that he had only reached Daban at 4 P.M. He

had refused the offer of Mois with torches, as it would cause him too much delay, and in spite of advice to the contrary he had mounted my pony. Borrowing another for the boy, he had started up the mountain path as quickly as possible. Sau, terrified, had tried to turn back more than once, but as it was much more dangerous for one than two, my husband had forced him to keep alongside. For the last two hours they had ridden in complete darkness as fast as the ponies would carry them; occasionally my husband's hand found its way to the revolver in his pocket, but fortunately it was not needed.

We passed one cool delicious day at Dran, then we were obliged to start down again. We had a pleasant journey back, unmarked by any extraordinary incident except just outside Phan Rang. There, while driving along in the dark, we collided with a bullock-cart. We heard it coming, but nobody responded to our warning yells. We jumped down just in time, for the wheels became entangled, and the bullocks and pony went on pulling in opposite directions till the bullock-cart was dragged clean over the trap. Another bullock-cart in tow did the same thing—was hoisted up and banged down on the other side. We naturally thought to see our cradle-cart smashed up, but no! the iron axle-tree had resisted the heavy wheels and no irreparable damage was done. The bullock-carts had no driver, or he had made good his escape as soon as he saw what was about to happen.

In the heat of Nhatrang we thought with longing of

our day spent among the pines in the refreshing atmosphere of Dran, but we could only congratulate ourselves on the success of the expedition, for my month spent among the flowers and fruit of the Agricultural Station had quite fulfilled its aim.

CHAPTER XVII

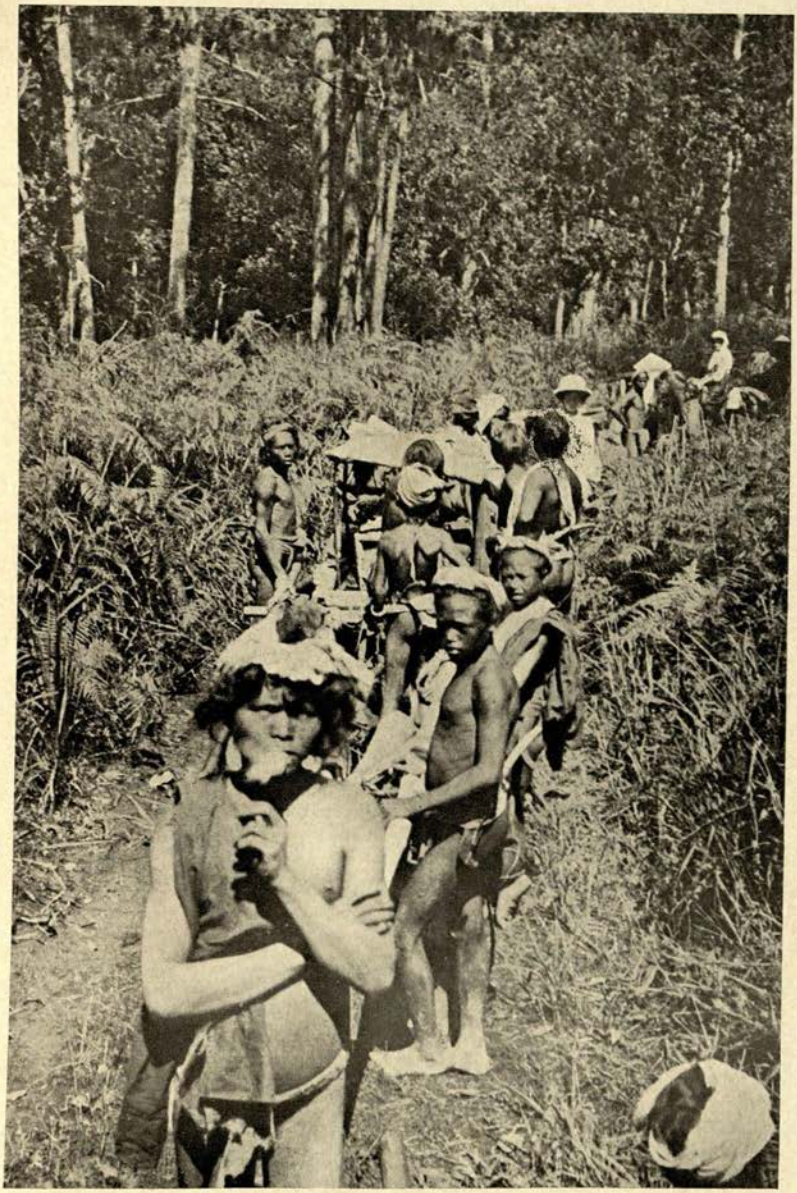
A TIGER HUNT

A tiger seen on the station : Surrounding his hiding-place, a clump of bamboos : A courageous dog : First sight of the monster : Wounded : Hunting him in the long grass : Escaped : Reappearance at the house itself : A night watch under a bridge : The tiger by moonlight : Killed at last

On our return from the Langbian I was so enthusiastic about the beauties and delights of the plateau that a lady promised to accompany me, if I went up there again. Madame Schein, the mother of the veterinary surgeon of the Institute, was in need of a change of air, and, by the time the dry season had come round, all our arrangements were complete. Madame and Mademoiselle d'André had returned to France, so it was settled that we should live in the little chalet a hundred yards from M. d'André's house.

We were very glad when the journey was at an end and we were safely ensconced in the little wooden house. Like M. d'André's, it was built on piles, with a verandah running all round, and was very comfortable except for the rats.

The very first evening we received a slight shock. On preparing to leave after dinner, M. d'André rang a bell and we were not permitted to start till our two



OUR CONVOY EMERGING FROM THE FOREST

boys and two Moi coolies had made their appearance, all furnished with lanterns. This procession accompanied us without exception every evening. The tigers were so dangerous in this lonely spot that every precaution was necessary even when walking from one building to another. In such regions the tiger alone can wander where he will with impunity after dark, and if man rules by day *he* at all events rules by night.

The second day after our arrival, I was out riding with M. d'André and a friend of his, M. Agostini, when we heard shouts, and turning round saw two Mois racing after us. They brought a note from the interpreter of the station saying that a tiger had taken refuge in a clump of bamboos a short distance from the house. We immediately left the elk that we were pursuing, called the dogs and turned homewards.

M. d'André looked preoccupied, but I could see that M. Agostini was as excited as myself. My dismay can be imagined when on asking M. d'André if I might go with them, he at first refused, saying that it was too dangerous for a woman, that he was responsible for me to my husband, &c. &c. I was quite determined not to lose such a unique opportunity, but having let him see my disappointment I bided my time till we got home. Then trying to appear as calm as himself, I used all my powers of persuasion and argument, and with M. Agostini's help at last drew forth a rather reluctant consent.

I rushed to tell Madame Schein, who was horrified to hear that a tiger was so close, and still more so when I told her that M. d'André had consented to my

accompanying them. She tried to dissuade me in vain, and finally wished me good luck.

The two sportsmen were ready and waiting when I returned; they seemed amused to see me with a kodak as sole weapon. I would much rather have had a gun, and longed to borrow one, my own being quite useless for this day's sport, but there had been too much difficulty in my coming at all for me to dare to ask for anything further.

We started off about nine, followed by a dozen or so Mois coolies armed with lances and poles, the only other gun being that of the interpreter.

Though the impending encounter was uppermost in my mind, I could not help being amused at the appearance of our hunting-party. The almost naked but much-bejewelled Mois looked so incongruous beside the two sportsmen with their modern clothes and rifles, that they seemed better prepared for a native fête than anything else. They had been abundantly faithful to their custom of borrowing all the possessions of their hut companions when absenting themselves from the village, and some of them wore a perfect armour in necklaces, bracelets, and anklets. One or two had even managed to secure some clothes.

I was very much astonished when the clump of bamboos in which the tiger had taken shelter was pointed out to us. It seemed too small a hiding-place for a tiger, and being entirely isolated on a bare hillside, there would be no other cover for some distance when he was forced to fly.

This was all the better for us, and we stationed ourselves above the bamboos so as to be able to shoot

downwards when the tiger should make his appearance. Whichever way he came out we should see him well. Once in the most favourable position, the Mois were told to advance slowly, beating the ground and making a noise. The last of these injunctions only they obeyed, for they would not go a step nearer the bamboos than we ourselves.

The Mois are more courageous in the presence of the tiger than the Annamese, but they are not less superstitious, so it was probably their reverence for a supernatural being rather than physical fear which made them reluctant to advance.

Fortunately the dogs did not share the sentiments of the Mois, and one of the three went unhesitatingly forward; soon by his excited snorts and the wagging of his tail, which we could just see above the long grass, we were certain he was face to face with the tiger. The other two, when they found the nature of our prey, preferred the shelter of our legs, but "Bob," who had already the scar of a tiger's claw on his back, seemed determined to be quits with his ancient enemy. Every now and then he kept jumping back, and we knew that a duel had begun between them. M. d'André, fearing that he might lose his favourite dog, began to call him back. It required several minutes of threats and persuasions before he could be got on the leash again.

Now that we knew the probable position of the tiger, M. Agostini determined to see if a chance revolver shot would not bring him out. He started firing. No response!

The Mois meanwhile had remained on the same

spot. M. d'André was obliged to place himself in their midst in order to persuade them to advance at all. He was very much annoyed at having to do this, as the tiger would in all probability come out on the opposite side of the beaters, and he would thus lose his best shot. This was exactly what happened. After another quarter of an hour of shrieking and pole-brandishing, a more vigorous yell provoked a growl. The tiger suddenly came out. . . . He stopped, turned his head, and looked up at us, a yard or two from the bamboos. M. Agostini and I were standing alone. That moment was an exciting one. The tiger was only thirty yards away. After glaring at us for half a minute with the evident desire to spring, a louder yell than usual from the Mois, who had not as yet seen him, made him change his mind; turning round, he jumped a barricade surrounding some rice-fields, and made off slowly across the valley. We could follow his movements for over half a mile.

M. d'André, being behind the bamboos, did not get a shot at him till he had jumped the barricade and was at least a hundred yards away. Even at that distance his first shot told. The tiger gave a roar of pain, stopped and looked back, then continued his course. The other four shots all went within a yard or two of him. We could see them as they touched the water, with which the rice-fields were full at that moment.

M. Agostini had failed to shoot, and I to take my snapshot. It is true I raised my kodak as the tiger appeared, but as he looked at us, I forgot everything, my hands dropped to my side, and I was completely spellbound. Though he was so near and ready to

spring, I cannot say that I felt frightened; my chief thought was that, in spite of his enormous size, his head seemed far too large in proportion to his body. If I had only photographed him as he stood in front of us or as he jumped the barricade, I should have had a most memorable snapshot. I was fearfully disappointed at having missed such an opportunity.

We immediately started in pursuit, but once within a certain circumference we were nonplussed how to proceed. One cannot look for a tiger as one looks for any other animal, the grass was very long, and we should have been within his clutches before we were aware of his presence. We therefore decided to go home for lunch, while the Mois followed up the traces of blood and tried to find out his exact position.

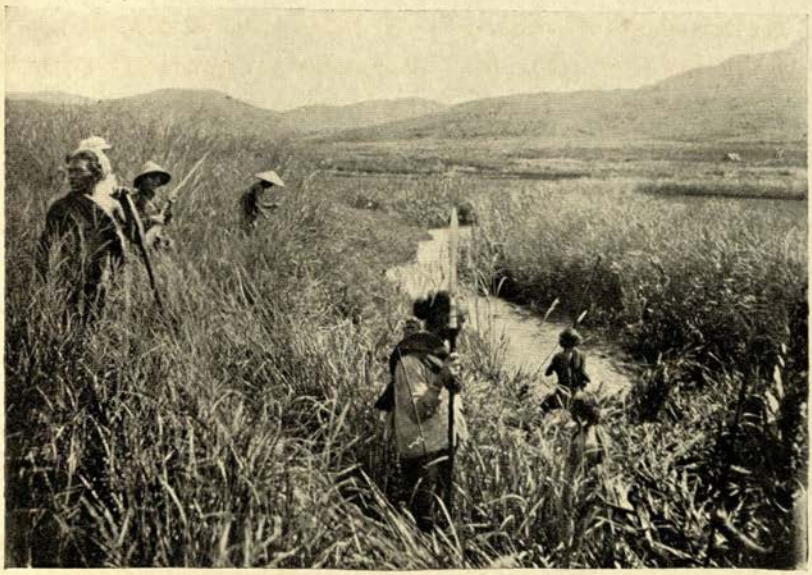
It was only on our way home that I perceived my kodak was still in my hands, but that the case was missing. It was very annoying to lose it, and I felt certain I must have dropped it at the moment I saw the tiger. M. Agostini offered to accompany me, while M. d'André continued homewards. We started off, but not knowing the country at once found ourselves in difficulties—marshes to go through, barricades to get over, and streams to cross. Eventually we found the kodak case, and being so near the lair of the tiger, we desired to have a look at it. It was very thrilling, but very imprudent, to enter the bamboos, and in the darkest spot to see the flattened-down grass of the place where he had lain.

The Mois had discovered the hiding-place of the tiger on our return after lunch. As they had approached,

he had got up and moved a few yards farther. He was now on the bank of a river in some long grass. We could not see him, and having tried a few ineffectual shots across the water, we decided to go over on to his side. There was no bridge, and as the river was pretty deep, the whole bevy of Mois was needed to carry us. M. d'André crossed first on the back of the strongest Moi, two others held his feet above the water, and the rest supported the one who was carrying him, for fear he should stumble or be carried away by the current. Then came my turn, and, lastly, M. Agostini. Needless to say, I did not accept their kind offers to hold my kodak for me during the operation. Before the evening we had crossed and recrossed the river so often that the manner of doing so seemed most natural.

We could see no better from the other side, and the Mois were told to begin yelling and beating down the grass. They put so very little enthusiasm into their work that M. d'André made up his mind to send for twenty or thirty more from the village of Dankia. The interpreter, however, came back alone; in spite of threats of punishment and promises of reward, not one could be persuaded to take part in a hunt which, according to him, would bring disaster on the village. M. d'André was not surprised, and told us that at the beginning even the coolies on the station were the same, and that it was only after he had killed his third or fourth tiger that they consented to accompany him. We were even lucky to have so many station coolies.

It is useless to relate all our different devices and movements to get a glimpse of our prey. Once only,



A DANGEROUS SEARCH IN THE LONG GRASS

BRINGING HIM THROUGH A FIELD OF MAIZE

a random shot of M. Agostini touched him. He sprang up with a growl, and for the fraction of a second we saw him above the long grass, then he immediately disappeared into a new hiding-place. We found that we had only been four yards away from him at that moment, but the danger of a wounded tiger at that distance only dawned on us later.

At 5 P.M., when the showers of the afternoon turned into a steady downpour, the shivering, unclothed Mois seemed to like their task less and less. An hour later, as darkness set in, we started for home. We had not got far when we discovered Bob was not with us and were obliged to go back. The plucky little beast was as eager for his revenge as in the morning; he was lying down at a safe distance from his enemy, but had evidently decided to keep watch alone all night.

We were very glad to get into dry things; we had been drenched to the skin for some hours, and had often walked through the rice-fields with the water up to our knees.

The next morning I rushed to M. d'André's house to find that the two men had started off at dawn. Hearing that I was still asleep, they had not liked to wake me. I quickly called my boy and went off in pursuit, but half-way to the spot of the evening's events I met them. The tiger had gone off in the night. M. d'André was persuaded that with both a revolver bullet and a Winchester bullet inside him, if nothing more, he had just had the strength to crawl away into some dark corner to die.

Subsequent events showed that he was wrong.

It was a disappointing end to our hunt, but M. Agostini and I were too pleased at having seen the tiger to feel anything but elation. For us it was a new and exciting experience.

M. Agostini left the station a few days after this.

A fortnight later I was awakened about 5 A.M. by voices beneath my window. I jumped out of bed and looked out. There I saw M. d'André in the midst of a gesticulating group of natives; his servants and half a dozen Moi coolies armed with every imaginable weapon were having an excited discussion. It appeared that the tiger had been to M. d'André's very house, had strolled twice round it, had gnawed one of the sheep-skins on which the dogs slept and had dragged it a little distance from the house. His hunger unsatisfied, he had made a large hole in the safe that hung from the verandah, and would have eaten the meat inside but that it swung to and fro and thus prevented him taking a firm hold. The cook, on opening the door in the morning, had come face to face with him; instead of giving the alarm, he had quickly and quietly shut himself in again. My boy, who slept with him, had also watched the proceedings from a crack in the door. It was only after the tiger had disappeared some little time that they had dared to come out and wake M. d'André.

All the available hands had been called together and had been temporarily provided with the ancient and modern weapons that adorned the walls of M. d'André's dining-room. Among others there were two French swords, Moi lances, Tcham sabres, modern rifles, and a kitchen knife. A search was now in

progress in the immediate neighbourhood of the two houses. I dressed quickly and joined in the hunt. At first nobody dared to separate himself an inch from his neighbour, and each bush was visited by the whole band *en masse*. However, though we found numerous tracks, especially round the house and safe, where I saw his saliva still on the wire gauze, we could not ascertain in what direction he had gone. M. d'André decided therefore to give up the search for the moment and find other means of catching him. The surest way entailed the sacrifice of one of his animals, but he determined nevertheless to put it in practice. Whenever a tiger makes a victim which is too heavy for him to drag off, he eats what he can and returns the following night to finish his meal. A poor cow was accordingly attached to a stake quite close to a bridge, so that in the case of the tiger killing it, we should have a convenient hiding-place to lie in wait for him afterwards.

The cow was found dead the next morning, its hind legs eaten. It was immediately covered with wire netting to prevent the vultures finishing it; M. d'André told me that he had heard that even the tigers themselves sometimes take precautions against these birds, tearing up grass and earth to cover their victim when unable to drag it into the undergrowth.

There was nothing to be done but to wait for the evening. My excitement was so great that though I went out snipe-shooting to get as much gun practice as possible before nightfall, I thought the day would never end. Sleep was out of the question, though I tried to have a nap in the afternoon, not knowing what time we should get to bed.

We had dinner at 5 P.M. and, before we had finished, it had begun to rain. Though I did not really hesitate a moment in my resolution to go, this steady downpour, the darkness, and above all the fear that we might have to sit motionless on the wet ground till the early hours of the morning, did somewhat damp my enthusiasm. M. d'André said there was no doubt as to the fact of the tiger's coming some time or other during the night, if no noise disturbed or frightened him. He added meaningly that if anybody made him miss the tiger, he wouldn't miss them, and glanced at his revolver. He was more than half serious, and I was perfectly well aware that, once in our hiding-place, I could not possibly come away and that I should be in for it till the bitter end.

Madame Schein was determined that at all events no harm should come to me through cold or wet. I was made to put on two mackintoshes, two pairs of stockings, besides my ordinary equipment of riding-boots, gaiters, &c. She told us to bring back the tiger, but I think her chief desire was to see us return in safety as quickly as possible, tiger or no tiger.

There were three guns amongst our party of twelve: M. d'André had a Winchester, the interpreter a sporting, and I a military rifle, a "Gras." There was still a glimmer of light as we started out; by the time we let ourselves down from the bridge and crawled under it complete darkness prevailed. We were allowed three minutes to shoulder our guns and make ourselves comfortable, then the light was put out and all was deadly quiet, except for the rain pattering on the bridge above our heads. One little stream fell on

my gun and I was afraid it might damp my bullet. I moved it an inch and, though I practically made no sound, M. d'André heard me, my arm was pinched, and I could feel two eyes glaring at me in the darkness.

Before we had been in position ten minutes, I had pains in my back and pins and needles in my legs, but naturally did not dare to move a muscle.

About seven the moon rose and I heard M. d'André give a sigh of relief. We could now see for the first time the body of the cow which was only three yards from us, and I began to fix my eyes on the small illuminated circle. Suddenly it seemed to me that at one place it looked a bit blacker than a moment before. I strained my eyes until they hurt me, and felt certain I saw a shadow; then, before it had completely taken shape, I was convinced that it was the tiger. I touched M. d'André, and immediately afterwards I was touched by the interpreter, who was on my other side. The tiger walked slowly up to the dead cow; instead of beginning to eat at once, he planted his two front paws on his victim and, head up, calmly surveyed his surroundings. His attitude was most majestic, he looked like a king whose whole kingdom lies within his gaze. It was a magnificent sight and one I shall never forget. In our position we were a little lower than the tiger; he was therefore outlined above the mountains against the sky and could be seen perfectly. His head alone seemed to fill my whole horizon. He was not more than three yards from us.

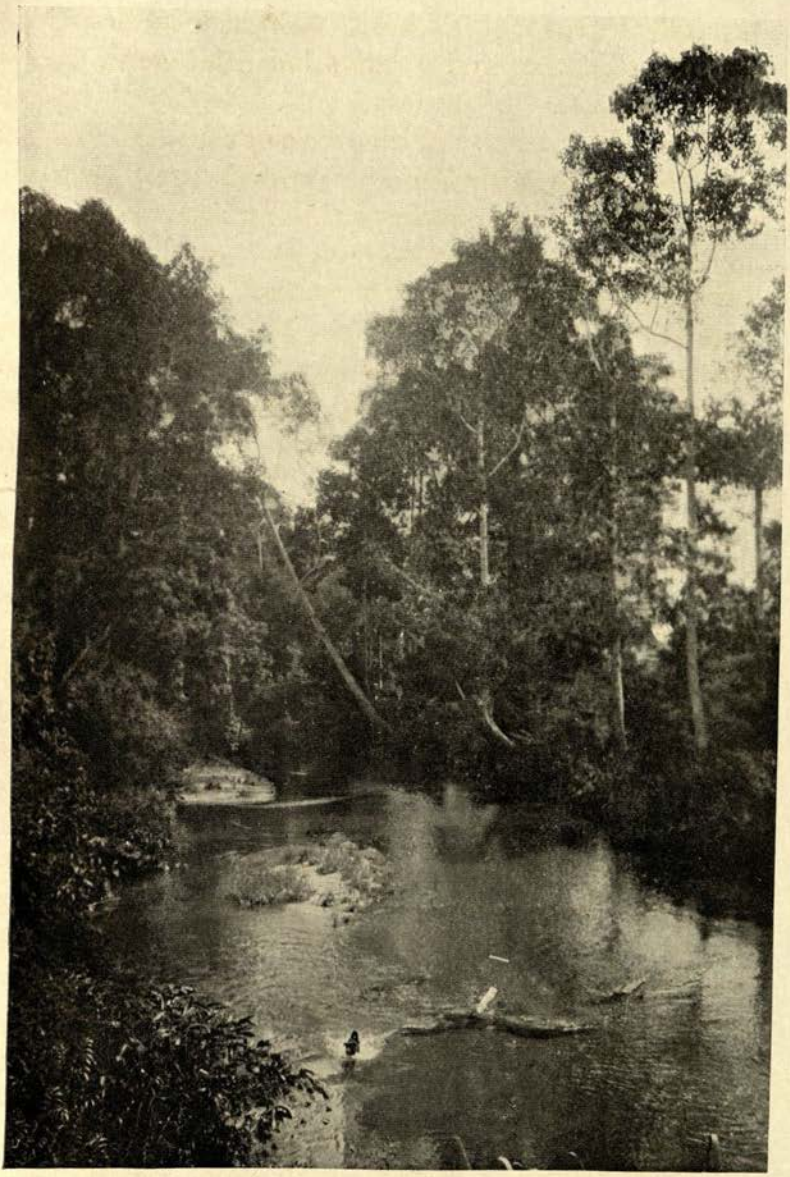
It had been settled that M. d'André should fire first, and we afterwards. There was no reason to have made the arrangement, because until I heard the

report close to my ear I had entirely forgotten that I had a gun in my hands, I had been so hypnotised by the spectacle. In less than a second I had realised the situation. My gun was already at my shoulder, my finger on the trigger, I pressed and fired. My shot rang out simultaneously with that of the interpreter. When the smoke of our guns had cleared away we thought to see the dead tiger in front of us, but no—all was the same as a few minutes previously, the mutilated cow alone lay stretched out on the grass before us. We, however, heard growls quite close to us, but were unable to make out from which direction they came. After waiting a few minutes we lighted a lantern and all clambered on to the bridge. The half-dozen Mois whom we had taken with us, on whose long lances we counted if we should be attacked from behind or in case the tiger made a dash for us, began to believe more firmly than ever in the supernatural power of their enemy. It was surprising to us that three shots fired at three yards had not brought him down. We waved lanterns about from the top of the bridge. Nothing to be seen. It was far too dangerous even to make a few steps into the grass, and we were obliged to go home empty-handed.

M. d'André was certain that we should find him dead in the morning, but I could not share his optimism.

On arriving home and relating our adventures to Madame Schein, M. d'André proposed a game of piquet to console me. I was thunderstruck at the suggestion and would not believe it was only 8 o'clock. We seemed to have been weeks under that bridge.

The next morning we found the tiger just two yards



THE RIVER NEAR SUOIGIAU

away from the cow, hidden by the long grass. Though wounded mortally he had just been able to make one bound.

He was a magnificent animal measuring 3 metres 21.

We wanted to find out where he had been hiding. To our horror, on tracing his steps in the direction from which he had come, we discovered that he had been lying all the previous day in some long grass not twenty yards away and quite close to a path. Had he wished to do so, he could have had anybody who passed along the path, which is much frequented by the Mois. I myself had been quite close to the spot snipe-shooting.

On examining the tiger's wounds, we could not make out all the different bullet-holes and at last came to the astonishing conclusion that it was the same tiger that we had hunted a fortnight earlier. Our surmise became a certainty when at the skinning one of the bullets of M. Agostini's revolver was found.

This animal, which had been previously wounded in three places, had had the strength to kill a cow and the impertinence to haunt the very surroundings where he had been attacked. We congratulated ourselves on our luck at not having approached him any nearer than we did during our first hunt. We might easily have thought that having bled so profusely he was no longer dangerous. Contrary to all our conjectures he must have been as vigorous as ever, for a fortnight later his wounds were nearly healed.

All the station coolies and many Mois from the village of Dankia came to look at the dead tiger. During the operation of skinning there were many

quarrels for the possession of certain pieces of his flesh and intestines, which were eagerly sought after as charms. It was even difficult to keep his whiskers and claws intact.

Going into the kitchen later, we found the Annamese cook in the act of pounding up and boiling the two eyes. His little nephew was made to swallow this concoction, and he told us triumphantly, "Now he always see My Lord Tiger before My Lord Tiger see him."

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CHAPTER XVIII

THROUGH HINTER-ANNAM

Preparations for our novel journey : The *pholy* of Dankia promises to accompany us : Scenery beyond the plateau : Difficulties of mountain and jungle paths : Our first night : Strange quarters : Cockroaches : A tremendous descent : Great welcome to a Moi village : The *pholy's* hut : *Ternum* : Sleeping to an audience : A hasty departure : Mois' accurate shooting : Leeches : Crossing a river : Moi weavers : A narrow escape from a fight : The gradual extinction of the Moi race : Dankia again

WHEN the excitements of the tiger hunt were over, we urged M. d'André to undertake the great excursion which we had been prevented from making six months earlier. We were to explore a region into which M. d'André himself had never yet penetrated, and where probably no white person had been seen before. No danger, however, was to be feared, for the presence of two women in the convoy would reassure the savages, also the *pholy* and chief Mois of Dankia were to accompany us. These, who knew M. d'André well, would explain our peaceable intentions to the Mois and parley for a hut when we wished to spend a night in their villages. We should take coolies from each village as we came to it to carry our baggage and send them back again so as not to keep them

away from their homes too long. By this means we should also obtain trustworthy guides, for the Mois of Dankia could not be relied upon as soon as we got beyond the immediate vicinity. Paths change their course at different times of the year owing to the difficulties of fording streams; if we were taken along a path which had not been recently used, we should find ourselves in great difficulties. Long discussions with the *pholy* of Dankia were required before we could start on our novel journey, but finally one evening, about fifty Moi coolies made their appearance, ready for an early start the following morning. They were our carriers, for though we were only to take what was absolutely necessary, it must be remembered that we should not find the most primitive contrivances for sleeping or washing *en route*. To run short of a candle would be a real disaster. People who travel in Europe and are used to finding beds, sheets, lights, and drinking water wherever they go, and who, if they have left any necessary article of toilet behind, can replace it from a shop, little guess what the business of packing is in this country, even for a short excursion. In Moi territory neither love nor money can procure the forgotten tooth-brush, matches, or boot-lace.

Bedding, food, kitchen utensils, clothes, medicines, &c., had been packed in readiness and were now divided off among the different coolies. The packages had to be of an equal weight and as compact as possible, because the paths would be rough and narrow.

We had decided to take only one Annamese boy each, for whenever disturbances arise between

Europeans and Mois it is generally the fault of the Annamese servants. The murders of the Administrator, M. Odenthal, in 1902, and of the colonist M. Paris in 1908 were probably both due to the misbehaviour of their boys. Mink, M. d'André's cook, Dac, Madame Schein's boy, and Sau, my own, were therefore the only Annamese to accompany us. They, like myself, were to ride, M. d'André and Madame Schein had decided to be carried in chairs.

It was a glorious morning when the start was made about 6 A.M. As the Mois never walk two abreast even over the plateau where the short grass would allow of it, the little cavalcade of fifty coolies looked in the distance like some huge serpent crawling slowly over the hill-side. I had a good view of it, for we who were riding had been left behind to shut up the houses, but it was not long before we started in pursuit. About a mile away we had a stream to cross, which, though not deep, was very marshy, and the horses sank in too deeply to ride them across. The ponies had not been out of the stable for a fortnight, and it was difficult for one person to hold all three while a passage was found and I was carried across. We had lost so much time at this crossing that on remounting our party was no longer in sight. Not a single Moi had been left behind to guide us, so Mink galloped on in front to reconnoitre and make inquiries at a village. He got no answer, for all the inhabitants rushed into their huts and shut the doors. It was an anxious moment. Luckily we caught sight of a line of figures on the crest of a hill and were able to follow in the right direction without the help of the

villagers. M. d'André and Madame Schein had hardly noticed these streams, for the Mois had simply lifted their chairs a little higher and waded through without hesitation. I understood then one of the advantages of a chair.

After lunch we said good-bye to the plateau and plunged almost immediately into thick jungle, dark and cold, for the sun and sky were quite shut out. Moss, ferns, and magnificent orchids of every description and shade of green met our eyes, but the atmosphere was so mysterious that one hardly liked to speak above a whisper. The scenery varied continually. Thick jungle of this sort would give way to a forest of pines, then to a descent down to a river bed in the open, or a steep ascent. Often there were traces of big game, but we seldom saw anything.

The path was always narrow, and on some days Mois had to go in front using their hatchets, for it had entirely disappeared. This was due to the neighbouring village having migrated, and the small human track no longer in use had become entirely grown over. Sometimes it seemed that the horses could not possibly climb up certain places; not only was the narrow path almost vertical, but they had to scramble over enormous granite boulders or fallen trunks of huge trees. There was no means of skirting such obstacles, for a deep precipice often gaped on one side and a wall of rock loomed on the other. It was often impossible to dismount, in such places one had simply to loosen the reins and let the pony choose its steps.

The first day we reached our destination about 3.30. It was a small village of nine or ten large huts, on the

border of a forest. The *pholy* of Dankia went on in front and began parleying for one of these huts to sleep in. The chief at last consented to give up the smallest, and as soon as all the inhabitants, bending low, had made their way out through the narrow hole which served as door, we penetrated inside. The smoke and smells brought me quickly out again, and calling in to M. d'André through the opening, I asked if I could not sleep in the open air, for it seemed impossible to spend a night in such an atmosphere. The question brought him to the door, and for a moment he looked rather taken aback, but with a shrug of his shoulders, he said I could sleep where I liked, and that if I expected first-class hotels, I should not undertake such journeys. I saw I should have to make the best of it, for the folly of trying to sleep outside became only too evident. Barricades were already being made to protect the horses, and fires lit to keep off the tigers. Gathering courage, I again entered our sleeping abode. M. d'André had had the fires swept out, and this was already an improvement.

The first thing I did after creeping through the door was to knock my head violently against the roof. It was impossible to stand upright, quantities of maize, hanging from the roof to dry, made the space even less than it would otherwise have been. The floor was composed of strips of bamboo laid down at slight intervals at about one foot above the earth. As the Mois poured all the remains of their food and drink between these strips, the strange odour was easily accounted for. Another drawback about them was that I kept catching my heel between them and nearly

falling down. M. d'André had already unpacked, and was busily engaged arranging his mattress on the floor. Finding no mosquitoes, he had not taken the trouble to put up his camp bed. I asked where I should put up ours. He said he thought we should be more comfortable at the farther end of the hut, as the Mois and our boys were continually going in and out.

The hut was partly partitioned off; so calling Sau, I set him to work to put up my bed and that of Madame Schein, who had not yet arrived. The fire was still burning in our part of the hut, and though I demanded of the *pholy* that it should be put out, my request was emphatically refused, and I came to the conclusion that there was some superstition connected with it and thought it useless to insist. If we had to submit to dust and ashes, I was determined at any rate not to tolerate the smoke, and as soon as the Mois had disappeared I confess to stamping on the sacred flame till it was extinguished.

It is difficult to unpack, put up camp beds, and arrange mosquito curtains by the light of a single candle, especially when one is knocking one's head and tripping up continually, but at last it was done. I had even washed and changed by the time Madame Schein arrived. She was not so horrified as I had feared at the sight of our sleeping apartment, but then she had not seen its former inhabitants; and now indeed, with beds made up and the air less smoky, the place looked more habitable. When all was ready for the night we took a stroll round the village. The women on our arrival had disappeared like rabbits into holes,

A WELL-MADE MOI DWELLING

A CURIOUS STAIRCASE

and very few men were to be seen; but we soon became aware of innumerable heads peeping at us from every side. Many women and children had hidden themselves in the shadow of the trees surrounding the village, others were crouching in their hut doors, so that we could not get a good view of our savage hosts. The idea of holding out a piece of sugar proved a happy one, for at length one youngster had the courage to come and take it. A little nibble proving satisfactory, he divided it generously among his companions, and many others were thereupon emboldened to follow his example. At last we had little naked children coming towards us from every corner. Some of only three or four years were pushed forward by their mothers, but were too frightened to approach and began to cry. This forced the mothers to carry them to us, and thus we at last had a good view of the Moi women. Some of them seemed to be wearing gloves, which struck us as a curious garment considering they were naked to the waist, but on closer inspection we saw that the skin from elbow to finger-tips was of a dark blue colour. This village was apparently engaged in dyeing the blue cloth which the natives of this region wear.

On our return we found that Mink had prepared us a good dinner just outside our hut; the table was a plank supported on two scooped-out tree trunks which the Mois use for shelling rice, our chairs were improvised in like manner. The whole village collected round to see us eat, curious eyes peering out from among the trees and from every shadow.

About seven it began to get chilly, and we decided

to retire. We felt more cheerful over our sleeping accommodation after a good meal, but alas! our worst discovery was still to come. We had noticed a few beetles when it was still light. Now after dark the hut was moving with them! It was an indescribable sight. There were fifty drowned in the basin on the floor that we had washed in. Every time I knocked my head against the roof, I got half a dozen in my hair. M. d'André was obliged to put up his bed after all, and even our mosquito curtains had not entirely protected ours from their inroads.

Oh, the difficulties of undressing in a Moi hut! It is impossible to set one's bare feet on the dirty bamboo floor, yet there is nothing to sit on; one cannot leave one's clothes at the mercy of cockroaches and vermin, yet there is no place to put them in safety. We finally tied them to a string and suspended them from the ceiling. Our heads were frightfully bruised and full of maize husks by the time we at last crawled under our mosquito curtains. We were unpleasantly reminded of the story of a man who in similar surroundings awoke to find that his finger and toe nails had been eaten off by cockroaches. But even the thought that the same fate might be awaiting us did not keep us awake long, and we slept as well as if we had been safe at home. By seven the next morning we were up and dressed, our beds packed and all ready for a start.

The scenery was magnificent and ever-changing. Emerging from the forest we found ourselves at one time overlooking a deep valley. From where we stood the mountain descended almost vertically and at the foot was a fast-flowing stream. We had not been

aware of the gradual ascent, and the beautiful view from such a height over a vast stretch of country was a most welcome surprise. All the more so that for several hours we had been shut in by the forest, exhausting ourselves by stumbling over fallen trunks and catching our clothes in branches. Although it had begun to drizzle and there was a drifting mist, this, instead of spoiling the landscape, seemed to add to it new beauty and mystery.

We had glimpses of the mountain on the farther side of the valley, with its forests, its huge granite boulders, its waterfalls. On our side of the valley there were also waterfalls, and one was quite close to us, for we could hear it distinctly. It was rushing down with many others to the river below, and occasionally we could see between the trees the white foam as it dashed over stones and rocks.

I shall never forget that steep and slippery descent into the valley. Waiting for the coolie who was carrying my mackintosh, I had fallen behind the rest of the party, and on remounting found myself with only a single Moi, outdistanced by a mile or so. I had not gone more than a few steps before my pony slipped and only regained his balance after much stumbling and staggering. I dismounted, handed the reins to the Moi, and prepared to descend on foot. The poor animal slid on all fours, and it was with the greatest difficulty that it could be brought to a standstill at intervals. I was in great distress lest it should be lamed or damaged, and longed to be able to talk to my companion or to catch up the rest of the party. My own difficulties were equal to those of the pony, and I had even less power

of balance. I was thankful when at the bottom of the ravine we came upon the other horses and coolies. The whole party was covered with mud from head to foot.

We now had to cross the torrent. There were rough tree trunks placed from boulder to boulder, but as they were high above the water it was rather nervous work. In the end we took off our boots, which might have made us slip, and passed over in stockinged feet.

One day, on approaching our destination,* we heard the sound of gongs and drums. The village had evidently been informed of our coming, and all this noise was either to fête us or forbid our entry. The huts were built on piles or simply on trunks of trees cut down four or five metres from the ground, but which for the most part had sprouted again. While in consultation as to whether we should advance, a crowd began to descend from the biggest hut and make its way towards us. We could distinguish the *pholy* by his umbrella, and were soon aware that he was welcoming us in his most amicable manner. He led us back to his hut, from which the gongs were still thundering, and taking the hand of M. d'André helped him to mount the narrow plank of wood which served as staircase. Then the *pholy's* wife descended and did the same for Madame Schein and myself. Her services were needed, for it was not easy to get our

* I regret to be unable to give the names of the villages we visited, or the rivers we crossed, but no map of this district has as yet been made, and the pronunciation by the natives often differed so much that it seems useless to write down words which have little chance of being correct.

nailed boots into the small niches made for the supple bare feet of the Mois.

As soon as we had made our way through the crowd at the entrance into the hut, a pig was presented to us, its four legs tied to the pole on which it was carried. Its yells, together with the noise of the musical instruments, were deafening. We were also blinded by the smoke; but when I attempted to make my way to the door for fresh air, I was told that the pig was being killed there in our honour, so I returned to my seat.

The hut was divided into two parts: the first, where we were sitting, was apparently common to all, groups of men, women, and children were squatting here and there. The other part consisted of a sort of dormitory. There were different compartments, like small cubicles, each containing its mat, circle of ashes for a fireplace, and its saucepan for the use of one family. Some were empty, in others a woman was squatting with her children. No partition was shut off except the chief's, but nevertheless no man entered his neighbour's domain. The women of this tribe, we understood, themselves chose their husbands, and if the lucky man refused the honour he was obliged to pay a fine! Even his acceptance was onerous, for he had to serve his parents-in-law a year, unless he could give them a present such as a buffalo or a full-grown slave. The children took, moreover, their mother's name.

After our inspection we were invited to partake of the national beverage. Many large jars of *ternum* had already been dragged into the middle of the room. The *pholy* was the first to drink. Squatting down, he thrust one end of the bamboo into the liquor,

the other into his mouth. With a smile of satisfaction he then handed the bamboo on to me, who happened to be standing next him. I would willingly have passed it on, but he made signs for me to drink. It was impossible even to wipe the end surreptitiously with my handkerchief with so many pairs of eyes fixed on me. So perforce I boldly placed it in my mouth. I tasted nothing until I obeyed the Mois' signs to squat as they did: then, with the bamboo curved downwards, a flow of their precious liquid rushed through my lips and down my throat. I had enough to last me a lifetime! When the bamboo had been passed round several times, and faces had begun to get red and their manners to each other less courteous, we asked permission to retire. The *pholy* wanted us to stay all night drinking with them, and great pressure was needed before he would allow our beds to be put up in a neighbouring hut. What a funny night that was! All the inhabitants of the village who were not engaged in the drinking banquet were gathered round our walls. They watched us with the greatest curiosity as we dined and made our preparations for the night. Their interest did not wane when we retired to bed. They were at least four deep round the hut, peeping in through the cracks. We found them in exactly the same position in the morning. Those who had a good view would no more have thought of giving up their places than would Londoners who have succeeded in getting the front row of the pit. I could not make up my mind whether it was better to undress in the dark and risk treading on a scorpion (one of these poisonous vermin had walked across our table-cloth as we were

sitting on the floor at dinner) or light a candle and brave the eyes of the multitude. Once in bed we did not mind whether we were watched or not.

The next morning with the first streak of dawn we were astir, hurrying our preparations for departure. The festive music still continued at intervals, but hoarse ejaculations and bursts of laughter were now intermingled with it. All the Moi men, women, and children were evidently drunk, but the feast (in our honour) was not yet terminated ; fresh jars of *ternum* had been brought. We thought it wiser to omit our farewells to our rather too hospitable hosts and to retire as quickly and quietly as possible.

The inhabitants of this village were great adepts with the bow and arrow—at any rate if the following story of Mink's is true. He had been left behind to pack up the breakfast things, and saw a Moi hunter perched up in a tree lying in wait for monkeys. Just as the Moi was about to shoot he dropped his quiver. Without a moment's hesitation his comrade down below shot up some of his own arrows into the hunter's thick chignon of hair. Both seemed to regard the action as natural. The hunter simply withdrew the arrows from his chignon and continued his sport.

Occasionally on this expedition we were much troubled by leeches. There would sometimes be numbers of them during a space of about four or five kilometres, then they would disappear again. If one stood still on a spot where there was no grass the little, black worm-like creatures immediately began to come from all quarters, raising themselves and advancing

rapidly, and if one took a step to right or left they would all change their direction and another circle would be formed. They even dropped down on to us from the trees. Their bite is not felt at once, and it is only when they are quite full of blood and swollen to ten times their original size that they leave off sucking and let themselves fall to the ground. Our Moi carriers had trickles of blood running down their naked bodies where the leeches had been torn away. They carried little sticks dipped in lime with which they knocked the vermin off each other. Here the Mois had the advantage, for it was not so easy for us to get rid of them if once they made their way inside our clothes. We tied handkerchiefs round the sleeves of our coats so that they could not get up our arms, strangled ourselves to protect our necks, tightened our gaiters, but none of us escaped entirely.

We occasionally had some exciting moments in crossing rivers, for some were deep, with a strong current. The Mois having forded it here and there, and found the shallowest part, the luggage was carried across and deposited on the farther bank. Then they all trooped back for us and we were carried across one by one in a chair. They supported the chair on their shoulders, holding it in place with one hand while in the other they held a pole to help to keep their balance. The water sometimes came up to their waists. If one of them lost his foothold he would cling on to the chair till he had regained it. I confess I was quite surprised to find myself on terra firma once more instead of floating down stream in a wicker chair.

Whenever we came to a quiet brook the Mois with one accord threw down their baggage and rushed into the water, drinking, lying down flat and splashing themselves and each other. It was a scene of rustic simplicity. The well-proportioned naked forms, half hidden by the green branches and waving pampas-grass, was a picture from the antique wherein man and Nature were in perfect harmony in their primitive beauty.

Our journey drew to a close. We had completed the two corners of a triangle and were now in a straight line for Dankia. We spent our last night in a village of spinners. All the strips of cloth worn by the women of the plateau round their hips were made here. The women worked outside their huts in the open air. They sat on the bare ground with legs straight out and wide apart. Across the soles of their feet a rounded piece of wood about a yard long was laid. This was kept in place by a cord attached to the two ends and tied behind their backs. A stretched-out frame was thus formed, and both hands were left free for arranging the cotton and plying the shuttle to and fro. The contrivance was primitive, but the shuttle and all the wooden rods were carefully rounded and finished off and sometimes even ornamented. We saw, too, all the process of picking the cotton from the trees, shelling it, separating it from the seeds, and finally drawing it out into a single thread and winding it into balls ready for weaving.

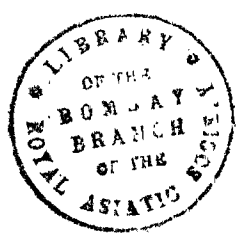
This flourishing industry made the village look very different from all the others we had seen. The inhabitants not being able to sit in the dark and smoky

atmosphere of their huts, looked far healthier in consequence. Although the men did nothing, for it was the women who were chiefly occupied in winding and weaving, yet they refused to accompany us the following morning. We promised them good pay, but for a long time they could not be induced to take up our luggage. Our last relay of coolies had already returned to their own village, and the dozen Dankia men, whom we had kept with us all the time, could not possibly manage even the chairs alone. In every village there had been some demur, but here it looked as if we should get stranded. After many threats intermingled with bribes, the chief of the village promised us forty carriers. But still the men were not forthcoming, and at last our faithful Dankias forced their way into the various huts and dragged out a few strong young men from each. A fight seemed almost inevitable at one time. We were really frightened, for if a scuffle had begun, one could not tell how it would have ended. We were thankful that this should have happened on our last morning instead of earlier, or we should have been nervous at every village we passed through.

As we recalled all our interesting experiences among the Mois, we could not but regret that this race, so physically fine, in character so much more sympathetic than the Annamese, should be destined to die out. Yet that is probably their fate. They must have been far more prolific in times past than they are at present to have survived the massacres of the Tchams, Kmers, and Cambodians, and later of the Annamese. They must, too, have possessed an extra-

ordinary vitality to have been capable of adapting themselves to the rough animal life of the hills and forests to which they were driven. The conquest of Indo-China by the French may have temporarily checked their downward course, but when the Saigon-Hanoi railway is complete and the country is thus opened up, these savages who cannot submit to civilisation will not find sufficient territory for their needs and will be unable to continue their arduous struggle for existence. Inter-tribal wars, alcoholism, low birth-rate, besides small-pox and other diseases, are still causing ravages. Only those who intermarry will survive, and they will be no longer Mois.

Having seen them in their wild fastnesses and been welcomed and well treated by them, it was a sad thing to contemplate. At the end of this journey we felt as if we had known them for a great part of our lives. Nevertheless, it was with the greatest pleasure that we found ourselves again on the plateau and saw in the distance the Agricultural Station. That patch of well-laid-out fields and gardens, after our experiences of barren mountain-sides and uncared-for villages, was a feast to the eyes. Our weary limbs forced themselves to one last effort in order to regain as quickly as possible the little wooden chalets which seemed to us at that moment the acme of civilisation.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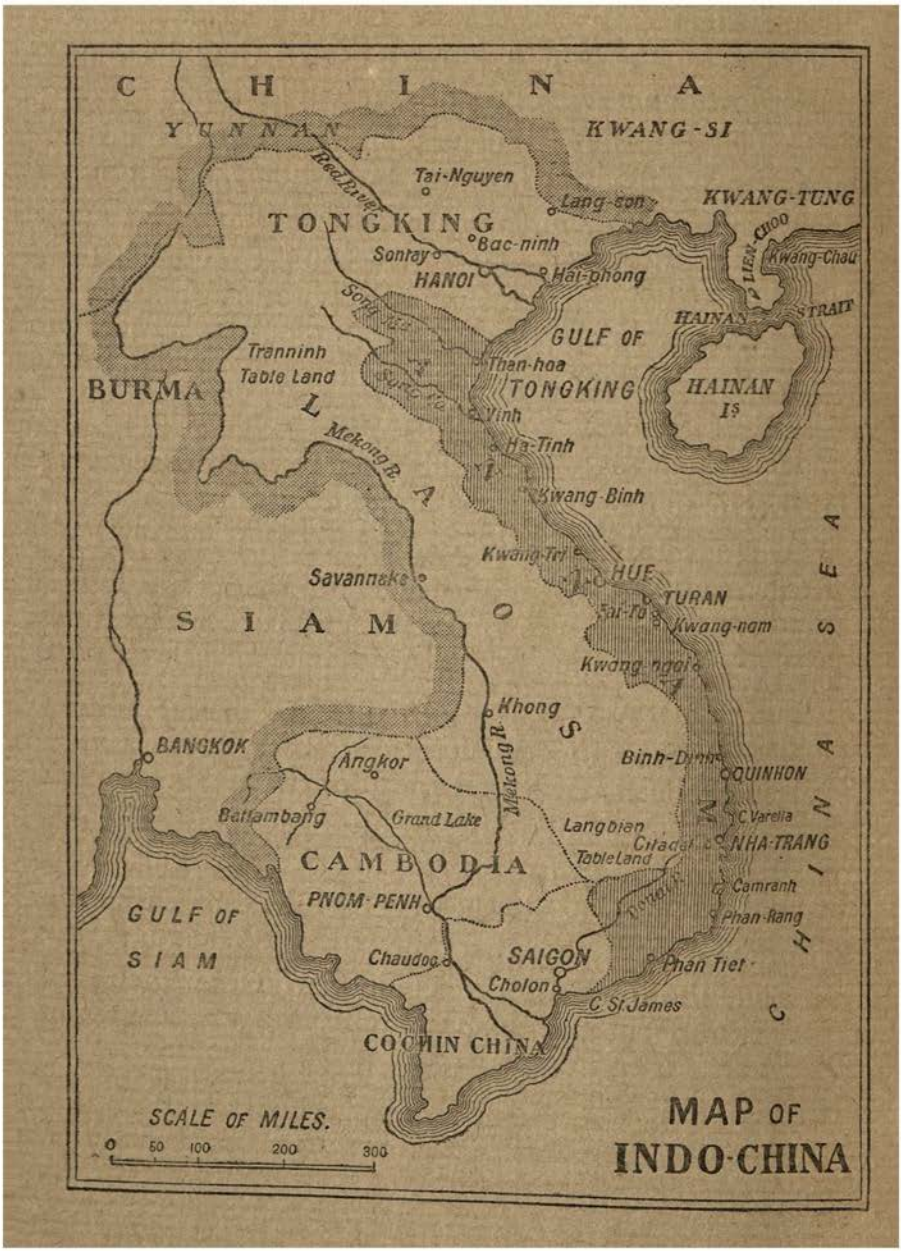
C H I N A
YUNNAN
KWANG-SI
Red River
Tai-Nguyen
Lang-son
KWANG-TUNG
TONGKING
Bac-ninh
Sontay
HANOI
Hai-phong
LIEN-CHOO
Kwang-Chau
HAINAN STRAIT
GULF OF TONGKING
HAINAN Is
Tranninh Table Land
BURMA
Than-hoa
Vinh
Ha-Tinh
Mekong R.
LAOS
Kwang-Binh
Kwang-Tri
HUE
Savannake
SIAM
TURAN
Tai-To
Kwang-nam
Kwang-ngai
CHINA SEA
Khong
BANGKOK
Angkor
Mekong R.
Binh-Dinh
QUINHON
Battambang
Grand Lake
Langbian Table Land
C Varella
NHA-TRANG
CAMBODIA
Camranh
PNOM-PENH
Phan-Rang
GULF OF SIAM
Chaudoc
SAIGON
Phan Tiet
Cholon
C St James
COCHIN CHINA
SCALE OF MILES.
0 50 100 200 300
MAP OF INDO-CHINA

GLOSSARY

Cai-nha. *Cai* = the, *nha* = house. The word signifies, home dwelling, building, &c.

Nha que = peasant.

Saïs = coachman. The name that the French have given to the native driver.

Nuoc-mam is a condiment made from fermented fish-water. It is easy to recognise the village which makes it. The smell proceeding from the enormous barrels placed in the open air in some central spot is quite appalling. There are different qualities of this condiment, but the poorest man's fish and rice are always flavoured by a few drops.

Choum-choum is the native alcohol made from fermented rice.

Linh is the Annamese word for a native soldier.

Trams are the stations or resting-houses along the mandarin roads. The system of trams was organised by the Emperor Gia-long for the transport of the post and for the convenience of travellers. They composed the different stages of a journey where a fresh relay of coolies or ponies might be obtained. Anybody found interfering with the tram coolies was put to death, so that even when piracy and plunder were rife in the land, the post going from tram to tram was unmolested. The French have continued to use this tram organisation both for the mail and for French officials travelling overland.

Sapeque. About 6000 sapéques go to a dollar. This is the most current coin of the native markets; the Annamese divide them into ligatures (one ligature = 1000 sapéques) which are threaded on separate pieces of string and carried over a stick or in a basket. The dollar in Indo-China varies generally between 2 frs. 25 and 2 frs. 90.

Malabar was the term used for any Indian in Indo-China; now it is also used for the closed carriage driven originally by these

Indians. This small box-like vehicle on four wheels is the favourite carriage of the Annamese.

Kilometre. 1 metre = 1 yard 3 inches. 8 kilometres = 5 miles.

Pholy. A Moi word to designate the chief of a village.

Ternum. The alcohol made by the Mois from fermented rice. It is not made in the same way as the Annamese *choum-choum* and is less palatable.

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